COQUIHALLA HIGHWAY 5 HITS 40 years!

Part 1

Heaven Knows

ZINE & JOURNAL

SMITH-EREENS RECORD

AND THE

BRITISH COLUMBIA

HIGHWAY GUARDIANY

THE HISTORY OF THE MYTHOLOGICAL BEING FEATURING:

THE EARLY TRAILS & ROADS

CARAVANS
HOW MERRITT GOT ACTION TAKEN

GREAT BEAR SNOWSHED
A FIASCO TO BE REMOVED?

AVALANCHE!
A LOOK AT THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE ON THE COQ

CONTRACTED AN OVERRUN:
A PETITE VIEW AT SCANDAL WITH LONG LASTING RAMIFICATIONS

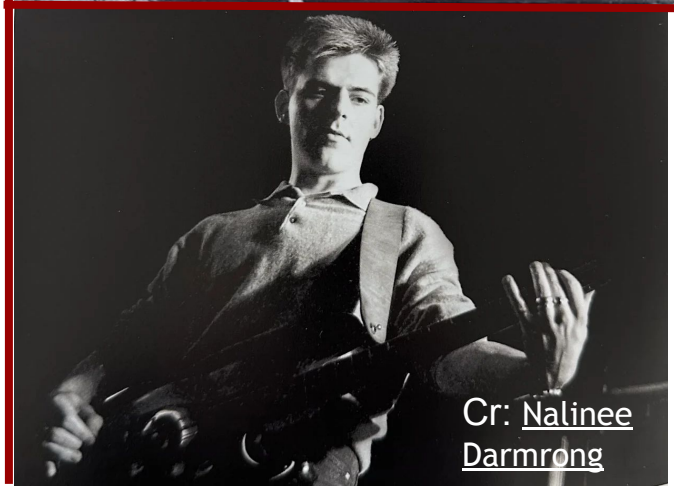
BUILDING & OPENING THE COQ

GRADE AND PAVE:
MAPS AND DETAILS

A DIFFERENT ROUTE
COLDWATER BYPASS

It's time the tale were told, no?

May 2026
Issue #2-c



Cr: Nalinee Darmrong

Andy Rourke three years gone - a tribute

Bill Bennett and Alex Fraser, May 16, 1986 at Hope.

(Quesnel Museum P.2003.9.760. Copyright holder n.k. Fair Dealing)

Acknowledgements and thanks to:

MLY

Merritt Herald and Hope Standard for permission to use their images

B.C. Legislative Library for supplying materials

Those who digitize materials – you do an invaluable service

The dogs/family for their help

Several unnamed persons

Everyone who made the road a possibility

Coquihalla HIGHWAY 5

Dedicated to

Richard Lloyd Gabrielson
James Leslie Ewing
William Steven Hrechuk
Marcel Joseph Pigeon

May your four names live on, as your contributions shall

&

R.G. Harvey
You got me into this mess

Issue 2-C (2026) reissued May 26, 2026 with copy editing and proofing

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Coquihalla Phase I edition
p.1 1-c (revised)

SMITH-EREENS RECORD
AND THE
BRITISH COLUMBIA
HIGHWAY GUARDIAN
Proprietor Keg

Internet Archive logo A line drawing of the Internet Archive headquarters building façade.

Dad, I did it, I outdid Phil!
CBC/fair dealing

Formerly May 16, 2026 1-B
This issue is May 26, 2026 2-C

Email me comments, critiques, opinions!
Eventually, I will try to publish your thoughts, responses and reminiscences. For the Smiths,I may take large contributions in the future. I foremost hope to hear from 'old-time' fans who found the band in the '80s.
E-MAIL:
smith-ereens.record.bc.highway.guardian[at]proton.me

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ISSN: ***soon baby***

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It's only a Phase !

Although the word "phase" isn't used in everyday parlance about the Coq. these days - the Coquihalla was initially conceived as being split into three phases.
Phase 1 (I) = Hope to Merritt
Phase 2 (II) = Merritt - Kamloops
Phase 3 (III) = [Merritt] Aspen Grove - Peachland [Kelowna] (the Okanagan Connector
Phase 4 (IV) = moniker for the Kingsvale Connection

Cover photos
Merritt Herald, June 14, 1986 ed.
Coquihalla Phase 1 Project Sign by BC MOTT **CC BY-NC-ND 2.0**
Andy Rourke photo: Nalinee-Darmrong
https://www.instagram.com/nalineedphoto/
Shields:Wikimedia

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Three years gone - remembering Andy Rourke, bassist for The Smiths, Blitz Vega etc. p. 111

The Coquihalla Highway lies within the territories of the Secwépemc, Sylix, Nlaka'pamux & Stó:lo peoples and they have lived throughout the land since time immemorial

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Sources and Organization Abbreviations (Glossary)

Ann. Rpt. = Annual Report for MOTH, DoH etc.
CtWP Carving The Western Path, a series by R.G. Harvey, former Deputy Minister of Highways until 1983
Harvey, C.C.= Coast Connection by R.G. Harvey, oolichan books, 1994.
1978 Envm. Rpt. = Coquihalla Preliminary Environmental Report 1978

FY = fiscal year, being between April 1 of one calendar year to March 31st in the next calendar year. FY 1985/86 was April 1, 1985 to March 31, 1986

Periodicals & Newspapers

ASM = Abbotsford, Sumas and Matsqui News
CHWK Prog. = Chilliwack Progress
HS = Hope Standard
KCN =Kelowna Capital News
KDN= Kamloops Daily News
KTW = Kamloops This Week
MH = Merritt Herald
NDN = Nanaimo Daily News/Nanaimo Free Press
P.G. Citizen = Prince George Citizen
Prov. = The Province Newspaper
TSM = [Vernon] Morning Star
VanSun, Vsun = Vancouver Sun
Road Runner, B.C. Highways Empl.oyee Magazine

Brief = MOTH Brief given to the Coquihalla Commission
McKay, commissioner, inquiry, Inq. = 1987 Coquihalla Commissioner Inquiry

Highway Departments and Ministries
“highway/road authorities” or “the Ministry/Dept.”

CCLW = Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works *or Works Commissioner*
DPW = Department of Public Works
DoH = Department of Highways (including public works portfolio)
MoH&PW as above but as a ministry
MoTCH Transportation, Communications and highways
MOTH Ministry of Transportation and Highways
MOT Ministry of Transportation
MOTI Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure
MOTT Ministry of Transportation and Transit

Friday, January 13, 1977 - Victoria, B.C. CA

Like any day, things happened and the world spun. Two plane crashes killed a cumulative 95 people, future actor Orlando Bloom was born and it was the day before Stewart Copeland met Sting for the first time.

In Victoria B.C., the Legislative Assembly met for its first sitting of the 2nd session of 31st Parliament. Something not important to an average person of course.

On that day Throne Speech would be delivered. A longstanding functional custom delivered by the monarch's representative 'on-behalf' of the government.
LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR Walter Stewart Owen began reading the speech prepared by the government and he eventually came to utter:

"In the long run, however, I am advised a new route is needed from the interior to the coast. The last major new highway route to the coast in the southern part of the province was the Hope-Princeton Highway, which was completed 28 years ago, in 1949. For these reasons, my government has directed my Minister of Highways and Public Works to proceed as soon as possible with the design and construction of a highway from Merritt to Hope through the Coquihalla Pass. This will require the construction of 70 miles of new highway."

This decision was came allegedly out-of-the-blue. Even to the Deputy Minister of the Department of Highways. Even though it had been decided upon in 1973 and the Highways Department was fully contemplating and intending the route; investigating, observing avalanche conditions along the path and establishing weather stations — it was a surprise even to higher-ups.

And the events that followed created a road with character like no other and a reputation and story

It's not like any other road - it's a crazy diamond; it's the ***Coquihalla Highway*** & ***May 16, 2026 sees Phase I of the route's 40th anniversary.*** In its honour it is now the time its tale be told in a bit more detail.

Early Trails of the Coquihalla - Skagit - Similkameen Area

Brg Anderson's historic 1848 overland trail to Nicola from Boston Bar

Bb Boston Bar Trail built 1859

D Dewdney Trail 1860+
Sections by Edgar Dewdney and Walter Moberly improved by Royal Engineers to road for 25 miles from Hope 1861

HBC historic 1849 trail

Hp Hope Pass - Dewdney Trail Bypass built by Capt. John Marshall Grant in 1861.

G Ghost Pass Trail (origin undiscerned)

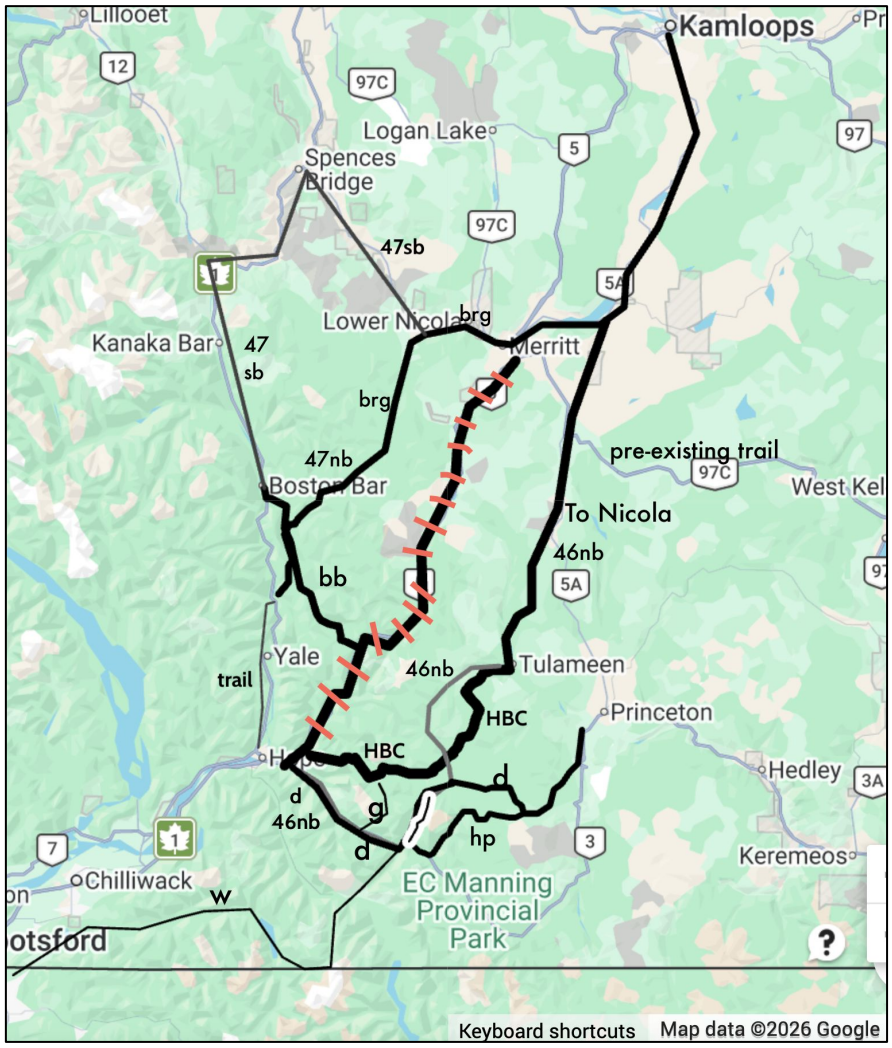
46nb H.C. Anderson's 1847 journey from Fort Langley to Kamloops

47nb H.C. Anderson's 1847 journey from Fort Langley to Kamloops

47sb H.C. Anderson's 1847 journey from Kamloops to Fort Langley

46sb (was via Lillooet and Harrison & is not shown)

W American Whatcom Trail - commissioned by Whatcom County Residents to avoid customs and excise. Built under U.S. Army Capt. W.W. Delacey



"Captain Grant Creek." Veterans Affairs Canada, *veterans.gc.ca*, rev. 2025.
https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/memorials/canada/captain-grant-creek

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Ormsby, Margaret. "B.C. A History." MacMillan of Canada, 1976 ed. p. 185.

Found rail tracks from OpenStreetMap © OpenStreetMap contributors

Those who are further interested may find Ken Mather's "Trail North." (2018)

Creech, E.P. "Similkameen Trails, 1846-61." BC Historical Quarterly, October 1941, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 255-258. https://open.library.ubc.ca/viewer/bch/1.0190666#p16z-3r0f:dewdney. *Provides a good summary of trails in the area towards Princeton*

Harvey, R.G. "Trails - from the Skagit to the Tulameen." (Map & Caption), Coast Connection, p. 32

Reid, R. L. "The Whatcom Trails to the Fraser River Mines in 1858 (Continued)."
The Washington Historical Quarterly, v. 18, no. 4, 1927, pp. 271–76., http://www.jstor.org/stable/40475158.

With Fame

Before white settlers, A.C. Anderson traveled the country extensively. In 1846 he met Chief Blackeye. Blackeye was an Athapascan Nicolan, whose people were called the Stuwix (strangers) by the Nlaka'pamux. Supposedly, they came from Chilcotin. Unfortunately, their language has been lost, with what little we have being recorded by Franz Boas. Blackeye's relative[s] showed Henry Newsham Peers a trail (Blackeye's Trail) that was approximate to the brigade trail of 1849 that the H.B.C took carved out and took full advantage of.

Creech, BCHQ, Oct 1941, p. 260 describes the routing.

Anderson, Nancy Marguerite. "Blackeye Folklore", Oct. 25, 2015, https://nancymargueriteanderson.com/blackeye-folklore/

We may have more Nicola Athapascan saved than the language of the Huns!

But white colonists did come - to raise cattle....

The Roads of Nicola

After the Gold Rush, the colonial government encouraged white settlement. The settlers of the Nicola Valley began ranching and Cattle raising

On July 22, 1872 settler J.P. Clapperton posted a letter to the province to fully complete the road to Nicomen (Spences Bridge), along with a petition to the signed by 25 male settlers of the Nicola. They asked that monies be spent during the current season (i.e. the not winter parts of the year) to construct a bridge over the Nicola River and a road southwards from the head of Nicola Lake as far as funds could provide. They further requested if the funds requested were not fully expended; that work continue from the Nicola RIver Trail's crossing of the Nicola River (unconfirmedly at Nicola itself).

(Correspondence J.P. Clapperton & George A. Walkem 1872. In Sessional Paper Return February 12, 1873.)

By September 1872 the legislature appropriated $4,500 for the Nicola - Thompson River Road. This road is the ancestor to Highway 8 of course.
(Daily British Colonist, September 14, 1872, p. 3.)

It appears another petition was sent by all but two of the settlers for a road to Kamloops and for the dropping of the bridge from the wish list. (Daily British Colonist, (Oct. 10, 1872 p. 3.), ibid, Oct. 7, 1872, p. 3) News of this was transmitted by William H. McKay, a so called 'pioneer settler of the mainland'*, who postulated a trail from Hope to the Nicla for cattle driving.
*Heaven Knows could not identify this man.

The settlers' change of mind apparently was not considered by the provincial government. The road building went ahead as initially desired.

In 1873 a contract for 32 miles of road from the north end of Nicola Lake (Moore's homestead) to today's lower Nicola (Woodward's pre-emption). Roadbuilder James McIntosh won the $4930 contract. Petitioner Alexander Robb supervised. (Rpt. CCLW 1 Jan - 30 Nov 1873. (p. 13). The road was graded just 10 feet wide.

June 10, 1874 saw the awarding of both the contract for the Nicola Wagon Road to Spences Bridge - - and the awarding of a contract for the 160 foot bridge across the Nicola next to its mouth at Spences Bridge. The gigantic road work contract was given to Duncan A. McDonald for a tender price of $20,500. Varying in width from 18 ft to just 10 ft. Dynamite was needed at points along the 34 miles of new road.

Thomas Spence won the contract for the new bridge. Another bridge was built by John Moore (of the Moores) at where Merritt is, also by contract. His $2930 contract produced a truss bridge just 12 ft in width.
CCLW 1 Dec 1873- 31st Dec. 1874. p. 323-325

McIntosh was awarded section #1 of the Kamloops-Merritt Road in c. October 1876 for a tender price of $3940.
(Daily British Colonist, Oct. 26, 1876
Work on further portions were let the year after.

Coquihalla, *What Does it Mean?*

The name Coquihalla comes from a single location. The moniker has ended up being applied to the river in which this place is located. Eventually, the name spread to the highway and other geographic features.

The highway carries itself through lands home to four (historically five including Nicola Athapaskan).

The Stó:lō people who speak Halq'eméylem (Upriver dialect of Halkomelem) found a difficult spot to fish at in what we now call the Coquihalla River. This led to the river gaining the name " Kw'ikw'iyá:la "

The literal meaning of Kw'ikw'iyá:la is "stingy container" (place) (like Scrooge McDuck). It is believed this location known as Sqw'exwáq is located at the mouth of Kawakwa Creek as it drains into the Coquihalla River downstream of the Rambo Bridge in Hope. This location is by Thacker Regional Park/Suckers and a large pool is evident from aerial imagery.

The word comes from the root kw'íy (stingy, refuse)

People would spear try suckerfish, and 4-ft tall black haired pygmies would hold on to the spears.

Brent Galloway's "Dictionary of Upriver Halkomelem." Has been the primary source for this section. However, an inconsistency is present in it.

In the entry for Coquihalla River (English to Halkomelem, Brent says that 'maybe' Sqw'exwáq is the same place as the Kw'ikw'iyá:la location. However, his Halkomelem - English entry for Kw'ikw'iyá:la seemingly concludes they refer to the same spot. It therefore appears that Kw'ikw'iyá:la is the conclusive name of the pool, and by extension the name was applied to the river too.

The application of the name to the river may tell us this story had a lot of importance for the people who passed it on. It has been shared that once Europeans starting coming, the pygmies began to disappear.

Could it be postulated that the pygmies disappeared because Europeans may have introduced improved fishing gear that made fishing at the location easier? That is something that will remain speculation and will probably never be proven.

The Coquihalla name has been applied to the summit, the canyon, the historical federal riding of Okanagan-Coquihalla and a new riding simply called 'Coquihalla' was proposed in 2022 when federal electoral districts were redistributed.The proposal never came to fruition though.

Poetic Translation

The translation of 'stingy container' is a bit hard to quantify/understand for English speakers (it was for us).

A poetic English translation of it would be "stinge-pool", "ungiving pool", "selfish pool of water", "Scrooge's pool", or "greedy pool"

"First Peoples Map of B.C." First Peoples Cultural Council, n.d. Online Interactive Map

Galloway, Brent. "Dictionary of Upriver Halkomelem." University of California Press, 2009, pp. 192, 1169, 1448.

"Proposal for Federal Electoral Distribution 2022 - Map of Southern British Columbia." Elections Canada/B.C. Federal Electoral Commission. 2022. https://redecoupage-redistribution-2022.ca/com/bc/prop/index_e.aspx

"Map of Okanagan-Coquihalla." Elections Canada, https://web.archive.org/web/20190612134722/https://www.elections.ca/res/cir/maps/mapprov.asp?map=59020&lang=e. Via Wayback Machine.

Coquehalla was in-use contemporane-ously with Coquihalla. The railway probably did it in....

The Hope Nicola Cattle Trail

The first comprehensive modern account

Before this cattle trail was made, ranchers had to drive their herds down to Princeton and then use the Dewdney Trail to transit their bovids to market in the Lower Mainland. That route was reportedly 124 miles (199 km). The other seriously contemplated route via the Otter Valley would shave 15 miles (24 km).

A Cattle Trail via Hope meant a saving of 44 miles (70 km) and a reduction to 80 miles from Hope to Nicola. That meant less tired cows, and less tired drivers. The first 35 miles would be the worst to build. Past the 35 mile mark word would become easier and the remaining 52-80 mile post section was light.

Nicola Trail p. CCLW Annual Report for December 1, 1873 - 31st December 1874. B.C. Sessional Papers via Legislative Library p. 306
https://archives.leg.bc.ca/civix/document/id/leg_archives/legarchives/669719870

In early 1874, the Province was the recipient of another petition from the white settlers of the Nicola. They desired a cattle trail via Coquihalla Pass to easily ship their cattle to market. They alleged they had no reasonable outlet for their cattle. Lands & Works Commissioner Robert Beaven solicited the advice of the surveyor, politician and future Indian Commissioner *(we'll see how that goes)*. Edgar Dewdney. Dewdney had taken a survey of the pass when locating a viable route for the (then yet to be built CPR). Beaven also commissioned a reconnaissance William Bristol. Both Dewdney and Bristol were accompanied by the same Native guide on their trips. (ibid. 328)

Historian, author & former Deputy Minister of Transportation R.G. Harvey proclaimed the Nicola Cattle Trail as the pride of *George Landvoight.* Considering he conducted... reconnaissance for the trail, and was the foreman responsible for its upkeep, that statement has legs to stand on. He was from Hanover - and along with Thomas Spence he had built the Cariboo Road from both Alexandria to Quesnel (1863) and the Lytton-Boston Bar section (1862), some 72 miles of road.*

Robert Beaven commissioned Landvoight to survey three options. A southerly one, one via the Otter Valley (Tulameen way) and the chosen choice of the Coquihalla and Coldwater.

The southern choice would've been longer than the others and was eliminated after it was explored.

Beaven had ordered the southerly survey July 27, 1874, and further instructions arrived on August 3, 1874. After undertaking the southerly survey, Landvoight left Hope again on August 25 with the aid of three native supporters.

Landvoight did not walk on untread ground (in respect to colonialism). In 1859 Royal Engineers and European settlers from Hope constructed a bypass trail which connected Hope to Boston Bar via the Coquihalla River, Boston Bar Creek and over the mountains to the Anderson River where it trekked NNW to Boston Bar.
Naturally, this trail was called the Boston Bar Trail. On the north end there was a well used indigenous trail of 32 miles to the forks of the Coldwater and Nicola.
(ibid. 333)

Landvoight settled on the Coquihalla and Coldwater route. He counted 68 miles on the route. The Otter Valley route and the Princeton routing were 106 and 122 miles respectively. The old Boston Bar Trail could also be used in ports. It would go through the Coquihalla River Canyon.

*(Gosnell, R.E., A History of British Columbia, Lewis Publishing Co, 1906 p. 176 (204)
https://open.library.ubc.ca/viewer/bcbooks/1.0230517#p203z-3r0f:landvoight
and
Scholefield, E.O.S. "A History of British Columbia: Part One." 1913 BCHA,
https://open.library.ubc.ca/viewer/bcbooks/1.0305035#p482z-3r0f:landvoight - revision of above.

A bit about

The Boston Bar Trail

Have you heard of this Trail?
In the 1860s, Royal Engineer Arthur Reid Lempriere had scouted the area. Today, Lempriere lends his name to a small railway point and mountain way up the North Thompson Valley. He had already surveyed the area (as mentioned)

a Zopkio
Cred: shawnemooe
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zopkio.jpg

"Mount Lempriere." *B.C. Geographical Names, BCGNO, n.d.* https://apps.gov.bc.ca/pub/bcgnws/names/950.html from Swanson, James L. "Names in the Vicinity of Mt. Robson." , publisher n.k. 1987

A road from Hope to Boston Bar was needed, and one of the routes he scouted was the Boston Bar Trail.

The little known Boston Bar Trail (or [Fort Hope] - Boston Bar Trail) is a shy & hidden story in Provincial canon. It was the product of difficulty encountered in establishing good terrestrial communication between Boston Bar and Hope.
The trail was constructed by a party of Royal Engineers and civilians, and with the wagon road in the canyon built soon after it fell into disuse.

It shared the same route the cattle trail took (with deviation of course) and branched off via Box Canyon (mile 18) the trail traversed its way to the Anderson River where it met at the Fraser below Boston Bar on the Fraser. CCLW 1873-74 p. 331

On January 2, 1860, Lempriere submitted a report recommending a route for the line of a bonafide road between Hope and Boston Bar.
He had undertaken his physical assessment in August 1859 after being commissioned by R.C. Moody earlier in the year. (Br. Colonist, May 20, 1959, p. 1) . Lempriere notes the Boston Bar trail is extant at that time). (Harvey, C.C, p. 29)
Submissions to the British Colonist - suggest it was probably completed in June or July of 1859. Lempriere himself reported that a 'Fort Hope' Trail it'd be finished in early June (B. Colonist, Jun. 6, 1859, p. 2)
He described the route from Box canyon as follows:
"ascending a hill, strikes the source of the Anderson River at its fork, [of] which it follow until it cuts in to the Mountain trail (which is not described in this piece) about ten miles from the latter [Anderson River's fork]..."

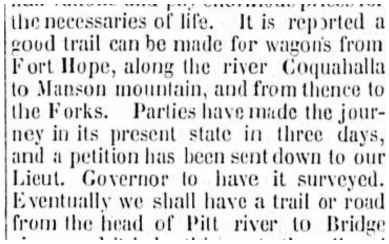
This description is of course, quite imprecise in terms of locating the trail. He chose to discard the possibility building of a road along the trail.

The Names Moo - ve me!

Considering the history of cattle driving, it's perhaps a coincidence that several of the mountains by the Boston Bar Creek Valley and near the summit are named after alpine species or bovine breeds. Types of alpine cows and bulls, llamas, alpacas, Chamois, bighorn. The two most relevant to the Coquihalla are Zopkios and Thar. Both are mountains and a breed of bos taurus. Their names are actually misspelt and clipped respectively. Their actual names (anglicized) are Zopkio and Tharparkar. The Zopkio breed is Nepalese and the Thar originate in the Thar desert of Pakistan (Sindh) and India.

All of these names were submitted by Philip Kubkik, a (for the time) well known B.C. mountaineer who was the first recorded ascender of many of the mountains he would go on to name in this fashion.

Report from Brit. Colonist, Apr. 23, 1859, p. 2 re: Possibility of the trail



the necessaries of life. It is reported a good trail can be made for wagons from Fort Hope, along the river Coquahalla to Manson mountain, and from thence to the Forks. Parties have made the journey in its present state in three days, and a petition has been sent down to our Lieut. Governor to have it surveyed. Eventually we shall have a trail or road from the head of Pitt river to Bridge

He was intimidated by the area and is well-quoted in writing of a few (many) sources as saying there were "fearsome snowfalls" in the area. (i.e. avalanches)

Lempriere, Arthur Reid. "Report upon the Fort Hope and Boston Bar trail by the [Coquihalla]and Anderson River Route." Jan. 2, 1860. Reproduced in Harvey, Coast Connection, pp 36.37. British Colonist, February 2, 1860, p.2 .https://archive.org/details/dailycolonist18600202uvic/page/n1/mode/1up? route chart).

British Colonist, August 24, 1859, p. 2. https://archive.org/details/dailycolonist18590824uvic/mode/1up "Mr Lad[mer] came over the Fort Hope Trail."

"Up River." British Colonist, May 30, 1859, p. 2.https://archive.org/details/dailycolonist18590530uvic/page/n2/mode/1up? 12 miles completed in May

British Colonist, May 16, 1859, p. 2 https://archive.org/details/dailycolonist18590516uvic/page/n1/mode/1up?q

"Mount Lempriere." *B.C. Geographical Names, BCGNO, n.d.* https://apps.gov.bc.ca/pub/bcgnws/names/950.html from Swanson, James L. "Names in the Vicinity of Mt. Robson." , publisher n.k. 1987

Time to build it!

With the route for the Cattle Trail decided upon and the decision to build it made, all that was left was to actually construct it. It was divided into three contract sections.

All of the contracts were reported to require a good deal of blasting. Sections 1 & 2 necessitated a deal of side hill grading. Cribbing (a form of wall) and other small walls were used throughout. All bridges and culverts were wooden.
(DAILY BRITISH COLONIST Feb. 28, 1874, p. 3.)***

SECTION 1 TO
John Gordon Todd (initially) at $8,800 tender price
(supervised by Lewis Francis Bonson)
Hope to the 20-mile post for 18 ½ miles
(some old trail sections reused)
Grading 6-feet (1.8 m) wide - 15 bridges & multiple culverts included.

SECTION 2 TO
John Gordon Todd at $11,850 tender price
(supervised by Lewis Francis Bonson)
20 mile-post (on the "Coquehalla River" to 34-mile post
14 miles of grading 6-feet (1.8 m) wide
37 bridges and many culverts

SECTION 3 TO
Hayward and Jenkinson (a firm)
at $5.930 tender price
(supervised by William McCormack)
34-mile post to Nicola Lake
46 miles of grading, 6-ft wide (1.8 m)
Multiple culverts and 11 bridges.

The trail could've been completed in 1875 however work on section 2 continued into 1876, with James McIntosh taking over Todd's contract. McIntosh also conducted repairs under a $1439 contract. Cattle were driven soon after. The trail of '75-'76 was a reality. (CCLW 1876) It's unclear why the contract was transferred or what happened to Todd.

CCLW Ann Rpt 1875.
Ibid, 1876

Epilogue

The next great road developments were the building of the road to Kamloops in 1877 or so;

the Granite-Nicola Road in 1892 (CCLW, 1892, p. 383.) & its 7-mile extension the year after (CCLW, 1893, p. 842);

the One Mile road of 1920 that replaced the Otter Valley Road as the main route to Princeton;

more modernly the Hope Princeton;

blacktopping in the 50s;

the new Stump Lake Rd in December 1954;

the application of the numbers 5 and 8 to the major highways in 1951 must also be listed

And so time passed in a sleepy land

What's in a Name? A Sample of Shakespeare

Shakespearen appeared with the building of the KVR. Othello, Lear, Jessica, Verona, Portia, Iago, Romeo. Juliet. The MOTH began applying more Shakespearean names to avalanche paths in the 1970s.

a? Janus = Allusion used in M.V. and Othello
s r c Iago - Othello; antagonist, husband of Emilia
s r b Portia -MV; one of the protagonists
s r Jessica - MV; daughter of Shylock
a Ophelia - Hamlet; prospective wife of titular chr
a Roderigo - Othello; secondary antagonist
rw a Miranda - The Tempest; daughter of Prospero & main character
rw a Cassio - Othello; Michael Cassio, Lieutenant of Othello
a Claudius - Hamlet; King of Denmark
a.t. a Duke - Multiple characters in different plays
a Emilia - Othello; wife of Iago
s r c Verona- Italian City, setting of Romeo & Juliet & Gentleman of Verona named changed to Aurum in March 1931 because of Aurum Gold Mines' operations here.
s r Aurum - name of Aurum Gold Mines who had a spur here. Aurum is the Latin word for gold. Coincidentally, the famous 'all that glitters is gold' features in MV. That connection is unproven (we came up with it as an idea before we learned about the mine). Formerly Verona.
a Janus - Greek God alluded to in MV & Othello as an interjection
Rhodes - it is a avalanche path which is across the valley from the Great Bear Snowshed
b Ottomite - Othello; a Turkish person (Ottoman)
a.t c Desdemona - Othello, wife of Othello
s r Shylock - MV, moneylender & antagonist, father of Jessica
a.t. c a? Montano - Othello; Governor of Cypress
a a.t. c* Certes - discourse marker found throughout his plays. Like "certainly" or "of course"
s r Lear - King Lear
r a.t. Romeo - protagonist of Romeo and Juliet. Station was over the mountain in the canyon
s r b Juliet - protagonist of Romeo and Juliet
s r Othello - Moorish protagonist of his titular play

a= avalanche path

s=station

r=named by the KVR/CPR

b=bridge

c=culvert
c* = arch culvert

~~m~~= name not assigned by MOTH;

a.t. = avalanche turret here

ALL names assumed to have been named by MOTH except stations, sidings and as indicated

On the KVR onwards Princeton,
The station Falstaff exists
- John Falstaff appears in Henry IV, Part I, Henry IV Part II, & Henry V. He's mentioned in The Merry Wives of Windsor.

Avalanche Turrets also at Summit, Box Canyon and Thar (a cow breed). Box Canyon Arch Culvert, Yak and Zopkios Culverts

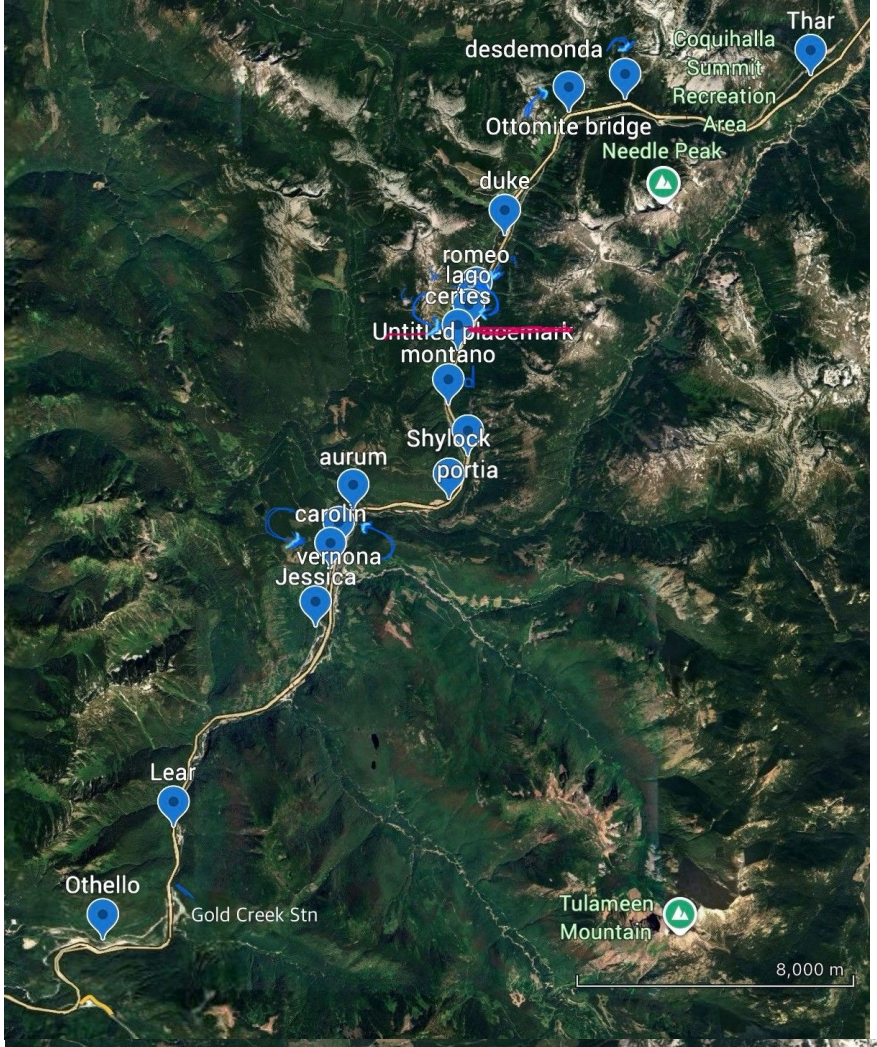
"Verona", BCGNIS, https://apps.gov.bc.ca/pub/bcgnws/names/53916.html.

Carolin - named after Carolin Mines, After they had claim to a piece of land in the Highland Valley in 1969 *(Prov, Mar. 10, 1969, p. 21 (incl. map)*. The area the company made into the mine along the Coquihalla was formerly the 'Aurum property' and also a grown grant prospect called the 'Idaho Zone'. (HS, Mar. 17, 1976, p. 1.). (HS, Sept 11, 1974, p. 14). It appears they began to drill in the area in 1974 and eventually started exploitation.
Brodie is simply named after a CPR manager by the name of Harry Walter Brodie

Great Bear and Little Bear are avalanche paths. Little Bear is just north of the Great Bear Snowshed. The actual Great Bear avalanche path is "Great Bear No. 5". It's not yet ascertained as to how they got their names, but they obviously reference Ursa Major and Ursa Minor. Maybe someone saw the constellations and thought "yeah, name those after them".

Who?
No one's sure who gave the stations their Shakespearean names. Every claim mentions Engineer Andrew McCulloch or James J. Warran, KVR President - or one of their daughters… Who knows?

Unfortunately, these are not all of the Shakespearean names used on the Coquihalla - only the ones found during research. If someone does have a list of them all, please make it public! *See maps next page to find locations of names listed above*

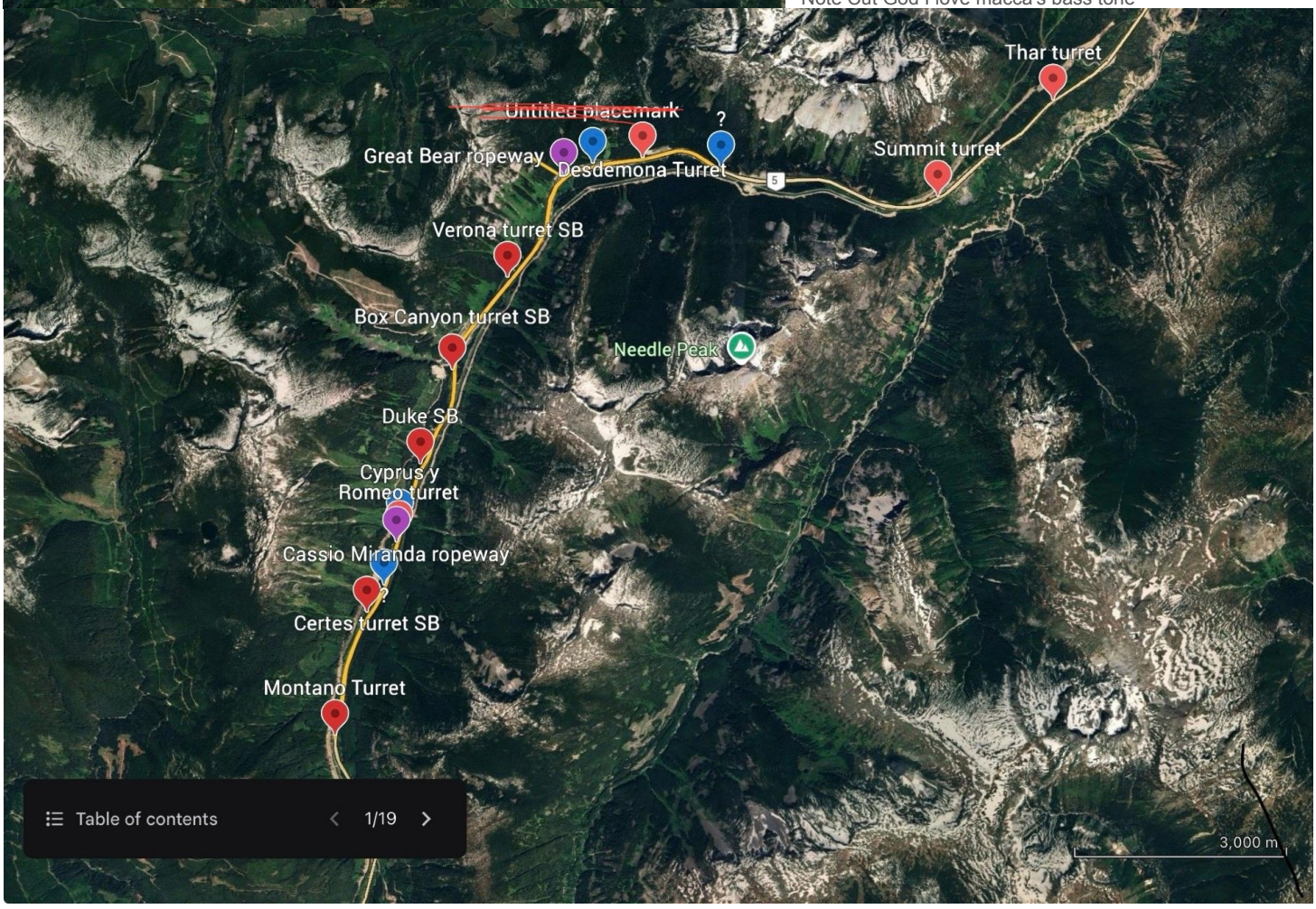


Top: Shakespearean names
Bottom: Avalanche Turrets/Names cont.

Imagery: Google and partners

Note:
Ophelia is slightly north of Lear

Note Cut God I love macca's bass tone



Choo Choo!

The Coquihalla Subdivision saw passenger service inaugurated on July 31, 1916* in the midst of WW I (the Somme was ongoing at the time) just after the last spike was driven.
The first train being a westbound service from Nelson to Vancouver

Vernon News Aug 3, 1916, p . 9
Calgary Herald, Aug 1, 1916 p. 11.
Vernon News, Aug 3, 1916, p. 1

According to a Vancouver paper, the train arrived in Vancouver at 11 am. A retroactive July 31 article in the Vernon News of Aug 3, 1916, p. 1 said it would leave Penticton at 21:40. Pedantically speaking, the train may or may not have traversed the Coquihalla section on the 31st or 1st during the night, or solely one of the two days.

It is said the last spike was installed to the east of the Ladner Creek Trestle.

A ceremony attended by Sanford and Smuin on July 31, 2016 was held at their believed location of the last spike upgrade of the Ladner Creek Trestle. Smuin explicitly states on the blog of a Fran Bucholtz

"We [assumedly Smuin and Sanford or others] are not sure of the exact date of the last spike ceremony. A special train did go through the pass on July 30 and likely it stopped here and had a ceremony at that time."

Per Frank Bucholtz,
https://frankbucholtz.blogspot.com/2016/08/coquihalla-rail-line-opened-100-years.html

The story continued. Washed out in Nov. 1959, rails pulled 1961. Pipelines took over parts of the route as access roads, etc, etc.

We don't have much to say. Sanford and Smuin have done a terrific job already. Please check out their books.

Canadian Pacific Railway

OPENING OF NEW LINE
KETTLE VALLEY SUBDIVISION
VANCOUVER TO NELSON
VIA HOPE
EFFECTIVE MONDAY, JULY 31, 1916.

Train Service Daily

THROUGH SLEEPER TO NELSON, day coach, cafe and dining car accommodation.

Full particulars from any C. P. R. agent, or write
H. W. BRODIE, General Passenger Agent,
Vancouver, B. C.

This ad was common in papers around July-Aug 1916

KETTLE VALLEY RAILWAY
TIME TABLE

Daily Westbound Read down. C. P. Ry.		Daily Eastbound Read up.
7.40 (Lv.)	Nelson	(Ar.) 21.10
12.25	Grand Forks	16.10
14.20 (Ar.)	Midway	Lv. 14.30
K. V. Ry.		C. P. Ry.
14.40 (Lv.)	Midway	(Ar.) 14.10
16.39	Carmi	12.09
18.03	McCulloch	10.52
21.40 (Ar.)	PENTICTON	(Lv.) 7.30
21.50 (Lv.)		(Ar.) 7.20
22.30	West Summerland	6.25
1.30	Princeton	3.25
3.09	Brookmere	1.27
3.21	Brodie	1.15
6.30	Hope	22.10
7.00 (Ar.)	Petain	(Lv. 21.40
C. P. Ry.	(Junction C.P.Ry.)	K. V. Ry.
7.08 (Lv.)	Petain	(Ar.) 21.32
10.40 (Ar.)	Vancouver	(Lv.) 18.00 C. P. Ry.

Passengers for Coast points, via Hope, leave Penticton 21.50 daily, arrive Vancouver 10.40 the next morning.

Passengers for Merritt, Nicola and Spence's Bridge change at Brodie. Arrive 3.21. Leave 8.45 daily. Arrive Merritt, 10.00, Nicola 10.30, Spence's Bridge 13.30.

Canadian Pacific trains leave Spence's Bridge:—
Number 3, Westbound.....13.53
Number 4, Eastbound.....15.35

Passenger schedule printed in Vernon News, August 31, 1916, p. 8

An English Mention

The Western Times of Exeter, England's June 16, 1916 issue mentions the Kettle Valley railway and the station named Pétain after the French general. He would come to betray his country and the station (and now place) is now called Odlum

The Coquihalla Railway Link on Wikipedia is really great. We can testify that the user who arranged it DMBanks1 is reliable in their work. Who do they do it ???

Atop the Old Line

Some have said that the KVR overlapped portions of the Coquihalla Highway.

Via a map of the abandoned railway compiled by *Heaven Knows,* that's based of NTS Maps, iMapBC legal parcels and survey lots., we can confirm that is the case!

We have determined & located these overlapping sections an accurate manner and are as follows:

-From Othello Rd / Peers Interchange Ramps to Nine Mile Creek the path is shared for about 3.33 km. This is a true overlapping

-From Nine Mile Creek *49.41936, -121.31467* to Deneau Creek *49.4392, -121.30* the railway weaved in-and-out of the highway's present bed. They diverge at Denau Creek. Some portions overlapped throughout this length of about 2.8 km in total.

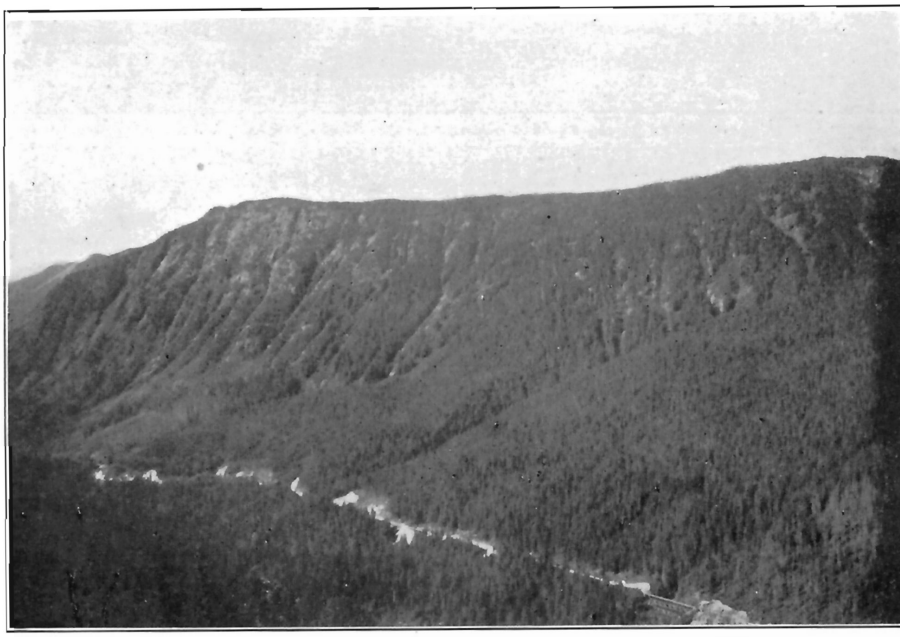
-About 700 m west of the Shylock Overpass the paths again converge 49.4949, -121.21941. The railway bent around the southern edge of the Shylock Rd NB off-ramp. They converge again before the railway heads south at a hairpin curve at Coquihalla Lakes Rd Exit 202, 49.5046 -121.19923 to access the canyon. This area is about 2.8 km long. This section only partially overlapped in a true fashion.

-The railway parallels and weaves from Coquihalla Lakes by the Britton Creek Rest Area. The highway's path is then crossed once and then shortly again all in a one curve. It seems the railway did not sit on the freeway's bed. It appears they never truly overlapped.

-The paths converge 850 m north of Mine Creek 49.6916, -121.0129 and diverge about 1100 m south of the Juliet Bridges (at the southwestern corner of Coldwater River Provincial Park 49.73056, -121.01185. This portion is 4 km long and is a true overlap.

-Just north of the former, from the north end of the Juliet Rd NB on-ramp to Hwy 5 49.74584, -121.0112 to the divergence of Juliet Dr (the old railbed) about 670 m south of the Bottletop bridges; the railway closely paralleled or partially overlapped the freeway's alignment. It appears the segments never really overlapped however. This is a relatively short segment of about 1.2 km.

These railway sections were located via GoogleMyMaps sometime in 2023 or 2024 as part of a map of all abandoned railways in B.C. created by the editor of this publication.



B. Looking down Coquihalla valley towards Jessica station on the Kettle Valley railwa
Illustrating the density of vegetation in this section of the area and also the clif
topography so prominently developed by the cherty rocks of the Cache Creek serie
(Page 22.)

From *Memoir 139, the Coquihalla Area*, Canada Dept. of Mines, (1924) by C.E. Cairnes

Geological interest and active mining came to the area. Eventually, the Aurum mine and Carolin Mines mine would leave their legacy along the highway

Pipin' off - Pipelines thru the Coq

The railway briefly had the Trans-Mountain Pipeline as a neighbour. The pipeline saw its first shipments across the line in October 1953 (Vsun, Oct. 15, 1953, p. 1.)

IIn August 1957, Trans-Mountain's new neighbour was put-into-commission.. The Westcoast Transmission Co.'s natural gas line ran from Fort St. John Abbotsford. October 8, 1957 gas started to flow.

(Edmonton Journal, Aug. 9, 1957, p.1)
(Vic. Dly. Times, Oct, 8, 1957, p. 1.)
(Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, Oct. 8, 1957, p. 1)
(Vsun, Oct. 9, 1957, p. 22)
(Vic. Dly. Times,, Nov. 24, 1950, p. 19)

A loop pipeline (i.e. a twin) pipeline of the West Coast Transmission Line was constructed during 1979.. (HS, Apr 11, 1979, p. 1) The new twin line was 20.2 mi (32.5 km) long. (HS, Aug. 1, 1979, p. 11)

Shortly before the announcement, Majestic Contractors of Edmonton awas let a contract to relocate sections of the WCT for the Coquihalla Highway.

On Oct. 21, 1979 a Cessna 188 crashed around the area of Needles Peak. This resulted in the death of its pilot Peter John Chick. (HS Oct 24, 1979, p 1)

" The Trans-Mountain pipeline was expanded from 2019-2024. The segment affecting the Coquihalla was #5. It was split into two at Coquihalla Summit. Section 5B ran from Bridal Veil Falls to the summit and was built by a venture partnership of Kiewit & Bonatti. The other section, 5A runs from Black Pines north of Kamloops to the summit. It was built by a joint venture consisting of Surerus Pipeline and John Murphy & sons.

TransMountain. "Coquihalla-Hope." n.d. https://www.transmountain.com/coquihalla-hope#spread=spread-5-b

TransMountain. "Meet Surerus Murphy Joint Venture: Construction Contractor for the [TMX] Project." Sept. 26, 2019. https://www.transmountain.com/news/meet-surerus-murphy-joint-venture-construction-contractor-for-the-trans-mountain-expansion-project-2

TransMountain. Meet Kiewit Bonatti TMEP Partnership: Construction Contractor for the [TMX] Project." June 17, 2021. https://www.transmountain.com/news/meet-kiewit-bonatti-tmep-partnership-construction-contractor-for-the-trans-mountain-expansion-project

Because of the floods in 2021 the pipeline was shut down for 21-days. The line had shut down on Nov. 16. The pipeline workers no doubt played a large role in getting the road reopened. Enbridge was likewise shut down except on Nov. 16, The project was finally completed in May 2024.

Reynolds Chris. "Trans Mountain pipeline back to full capacity in late January at 'earliest': exec, CP/Global News, Dec. 14, 2021. https://globalnews.ca/news/8451015/trans-mountain-pipeline-capacity-january/

Because of the floods in 2021 the pipeline was shut down for 21-days. The line had shut down on Nov. 16. The pipeline workers no doubt played a large role in getting the road reopened. Enbridge was likewise shut down except on Nov. 16, except for a shorter duration.

The TMX project was completed in May 2024 when oil began flowing.

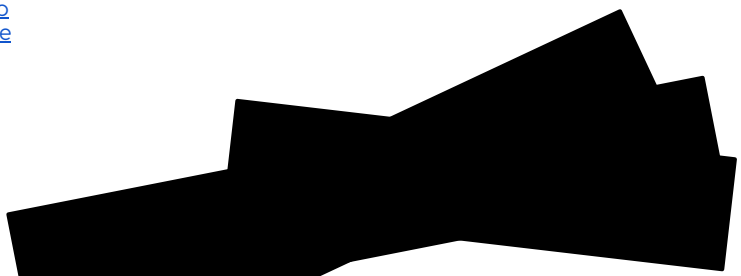
"Maintenance in the Coquihalla." *TransMountain,* (Map) *https://www.transmountain.com/coquihalla?b=49.288%2C-122.373%2C50.176%2C-119.751 Accessed April 29, 2026.*

"Detailed Route Maps

Morgan, Jeffrey. Enbridge partially shuts down Westcoast gas system amid B.C. flooding." *Financial Post,* Nov. 16, 2021. https://financialpost.com/commodities/energy/oil-gas/enbridge-shuts-down-westcoast-gas-pipeline-amid-b-c-flooding.

Owen Brenda. B.C. adds conditions for Trans Mountain pipeline expansion as concerns remain over spill-response plans. " *CBC News,* March 8, 2022. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/trans-mountain-conditions-1.6376895

Trans-Mountain "Thank You Coquihalla and Hope Region." "June 6, 2014. https://www.transmountain.com/news/thank-you-coquihalla-and-hope-region



The Coquihalla Caravans; 1963-1978

1965 Caravan ~~1963~~ @ Merritt

Merritt Herald, May 14, 1986, p., 7D, ibid Aug 18, 1965, p. 3

Credit: Merritt Herald/Nicola Valley Museum

1986 story looks to be mistaken. Originally this was labelled as 1963 by us

In the years after the Coquihalla Subdivision was abandoned, organisers in Merritt's Chamber of Commerce began hosting caravans down the Coquihalla route to Hope. People from Hope would meet them halfway. This practice began in 1963 with Hugh McGowan being chairman to the plight. Naturally, the Hope Board of Trade joined them. Len Wells and Bill Kraus of Merritt assisted McGowan. Caravans could consist of 100+ vehicles during these events.

They highlighted the benefits of the new route.

1. ,Cheaper freight rates [trucking]
2. More competitive business and cheaper prices.
3. Higher property values.
4. 72 miles closer to Vancouver.
5. Regular and scheduled bus service.
6. More jobs.
7. Economic stability
8. Shorten travel time in emergency cases
9. Make feasible the establishing of many businesses [sic]
10. Larger population with resulting benefits.

(HS, Jul. 6, 1963, p. 4)
(MH, Jun. 5, 1963, p. 5)

The first caravan was Sunday. July 21, 1963. The trip gave new insight about the area, its topography and the condition of the access roads to its organizers and participants. People from Hope were slated to drive to Merritt on proper roads the night before.

The caravaners knew for a fact the realistic choice for the road was through the Boston Bar Creek Valley and not the Coquihalla Canyon. Merritt' Village Chairman Allan Collet found that with the exception of the canyon section, the trip was easier than he had thought. 220 persons in 63 trucks, jeeps and 4WDs came out. Yale MLA (*for Merritt)* Irvine Corbett took the lead. Succeeding caravans became more accessible as the road improved. On other occasions, MLA Bill Hartley came along. Still, it was no paved road and most drivers had 4WD vehicles.

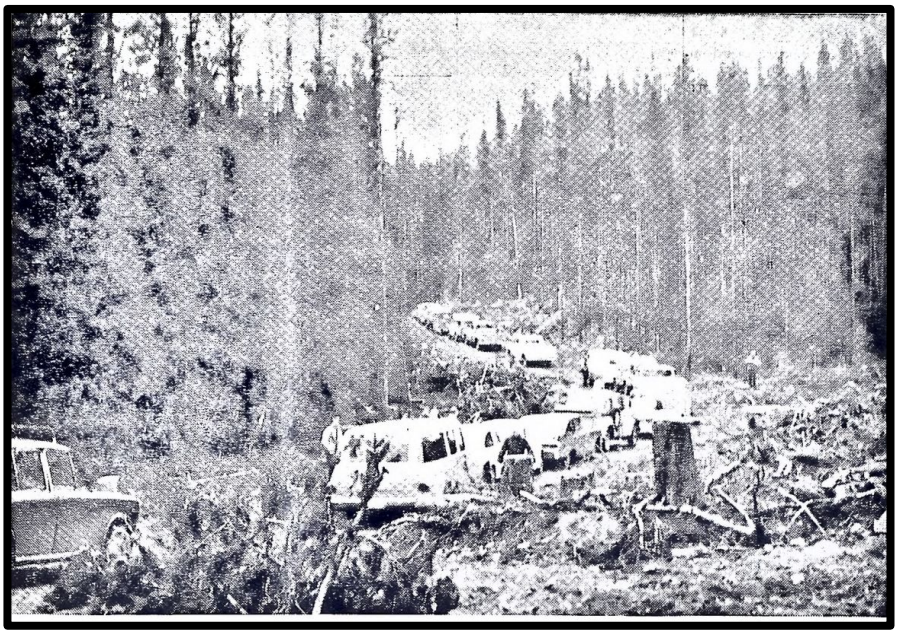
Caravans were held in the succeeding years, sometimes being absent for a year.

(Vsun, July 22, 1963, p. 9.)
(Summation from Hugh McGowan, MH, July 24, 1963, p.4.) (MH, August 6. 1969, p. 9)

Phil Gaglardi was invited for the 1965 event, but he gave no reply to it. He had already been notified of the event in-person months prior. (MH, May 14, 1986, 7D) Contemporaneously, organizer Hugh McGowan said he'd turned it down. (Vsun, Aug 17, 1965, p. 1) The Hope and Kamloops CoC's and the Yellowhead Highway Association would eventually start supporting playing roles in the caravans.

In late-Summer 1968. The access roads through the Coquihalla were left open after 6 PM and all day Sundays. Active logging was carried out in the area.
(MH, Sept. 18, 1968, p. 1)

In 1971, the Mayors of Kamloops and Logan Lake attended the event. (Vsun, Sep. 13, 1971, p. 6)



Kelowna Caravan of August 15, 1967, 10, 16 km west of Pennask Lake
Credit: MH. Oct. 18, 1967, p. 1. Credit: Merritt Herald/Nicola Valley Museum

Pennask and Okanagan Caravan

On at least three occasions (possibly four) , the committee undertook a caravan over the Pennask section of the Thompson Plateau to Peachland. Oct. 15, 1967., July 27, 1968, August 3, 1969. A caravan on August 22, 1970 was called off. (MH, Aug. 26, 1970, p. 1)(HS, Aug 6. 1969, p. 10)

The Coqfathers

IF the Coquihalla had a Godfather, that man would be Henry Norgaard, and its tutor would be Sherwin Kelly. Both men were involved from the start of the process

Kelly was Merritt CoC president for a time. In September 1968 he spoke to Deputy Minister of Highways Henry "Tom" Thomas Miard. According to Kelly, Miard found the idea to be excellent, and told him "it's in the books." He mailed Alex Fraser the request for a toll to be imposed on the Coquihalla in 1982 (Fraser rejected the proposal at the time).
(MH, Sept. 18, 1968, p. 1)

The Codfathers (cont...)

Henry and his wife Clara had participated in the caravans from the start, but eventually became organizers. Clara became Mayor in the 1990s. Henry had come to Canada from Denmark and came to Merritt in 1958, the same year as Clara had come from Edmonton. They started Norgaard Ready-Mix in 1960 and married a year later (Obit for Henry Norgaard, Oct. 9, 2013 https://www.merrittherald.com/merritt-loses-long-time-resident)

Henry became head of the CoC's Highways Committee - meaning he was selling the Coquihalla. Henry had dealt with Highways Ministers. When the Coquihalla was finished, he told the Merritt Herald that Phil Gaglardi didn't think the highway could be built. (MH, Sept. 18, 1968, p. 1)

Hugh Hunter McGowan organized the first caravan as the chairman of the committee responsible. He died young in his 40s, in 1972, preventing him from fighting further for the route. He was, it is said, "the original-G".

Last one?

Henry Norgaard thought the 1973 caravan would be the last, although wasn't certain. (MH, Aug. 15, 1973 p. 1), ibid, Aug. 8, 1973) Other sources published at the time suggest that it would be the last. They had declared victory after all, which implies that they'd stop them. Norgaard resigned his role in organizing the caravans 1974, killing the chance of a caravan for that year. (MH, Aug. 21, 1974, p, 1) No source suggests a caravan was held that year.
MLA Bill Hartley and Kamloops Mayor Gordon Nichol attended. (MH, Aug. 29, 1973, p. 1)

1963
–>

This comic ***by A. Bangert*** *in the Merritt Herald on July 24, 1963 shows quite the dilemma. The Herald portrays quite the opposite. Other people queried by the Herald spoke positively about the scenery, practicality and their experience (MH, July 24, 1963, p.4.) Perhaps they were playing face, because one person crashed and was hospitalized. Collet required a tow up a hill, a drive shaft was broken and of course flat tires for good measure. Like all good satirical comics, it is an exaggeration of reality. (Bangert, A., Merritt Herald July 24, 1963, Fair Dealing)*
(Vsun, July 22, 1963, p. 9)
(Vsun, July 16, 1963, p. 6.
(Vsun, July 20, 1963, p. 6.

Must I ask Once More?

Merritt CoC Highways Committee head Herb McCormack got one last caravan underway in 1978 to get the shovels going.

It was the final caravan - for real.

It left Merritt at 9:15 am, and all participants were given a certificate. MLA Tom Waterland, Hope Mayor Bud Gardner Merritt Mayor Allan Collett, T. Shandro, manager of the Yellowhead Highway Association all participated. (MH, July 18 1978, p. 9A) (HS, July 26, 1978, p. 1) . Alex Fraser was invited and hoped to come, but could not attend. (MH, Jul . 5, 1978, p. 1A, 3A)

By this time, active engineering and design was taking place on the first Coquihalla contract from Nicolum Creek - Peers Creek.

Here's Where the Story Starts

It's the intention - but when?

On Monday July 30, 1973 Highways Minister Graham Lea of the NDP Government held a press conference in Prince George . With him was senior highway planner Jim Dennison. It was about an expensive upgrading program for highways in Northern B.C., something of little to no relevance here. A controversial comment he made isn't either.

It is here that Lea (very likely) directly announced for the first time an intention to build the Coquihalla to the public.

A proclamation with so much weight that the organizers of the Coquihalla Caravan 'declared victory'. For now there'd be no more caravans after 1973 as they found they had achieved their goal.

(Victory, VSun, Aug 13, 1973, p. 26)

Newspaper accounts paint a fairly blunt picture of the Coquihalla being the choice of route, something later studies would discredit slightly by analyzing alternatives. Lea was clearly (at least publicly) stating his support for the Coquihalla route.

"We just cannot afford to widen the Fraser Canyon Highway to three or four lanes.--- we have to move with an alternative through the Coquihalla Pass and up Highway 5 to Kamloops."

With Lea, Highways Department seemed very set on the Coquihalla choice.

Dennison spoke that with the Coquihalla as the T.C.H., the Fraser Canyon would just carry Cariboo traffic.

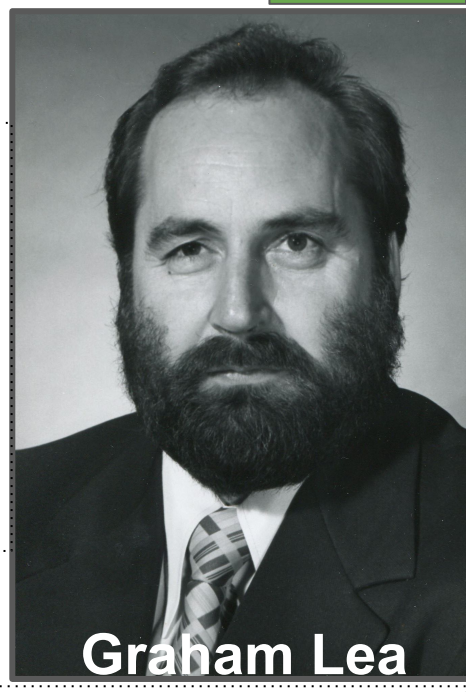
The Ministry would evaluate a few potential options, including a Lillooet-Pemberton route, the upgrading of the canyon and approaches from the Tulameen area off of Highway 3. (see next page)

Apparently, earlier in July 1973, it'd already been publicly mentioned that the Coquihalla route was being studied (or in the process of being studied).
(Vsun, July 31, 1973, p. 12)
(Chwk Prog. July 25, 1973, p. 8)
(Prov, August 27, 1973 p. 40)
(P.G. Citizen, July 31, 1973, p. 1)

IT WAS JULY 30, 1973

We intend on the Coquihalla

Lea's announcement has gone unmentioned until now. Perhaps because little was done after?



Graham Lea

Minister of Highways 1973-75*

According to the Langley Advance this was mentioned at a town hall on July 3 held by the Fraser-Cheam Regional District. (MH, Jul. 11, 1973, 1A). Likewise, the TNRD was informed and the word reached Merritt.

In March, MLA Bill Hartley had confirmed with then Hwys Minister Bob Strachan that study and snow tests were underway. (MH, Mar. 21, 1973, p. 1)

By the time of Lea's announcement, preliminary studies** had been underway and were 97% complete according to DM R.G. Harvey. In Sep. it was reported that a surveying office/base had been set-up in Merritt with 15 workers.
((MH, Aug 8, 1973, p. 1) (MH Sep 19, 1963, p. 1)

Late in the year the DoH completed and produced [a] "*Functional Report for Proposed Divided Highway from Hope to Merritt via the Coquihalla River - Boston Bar Creek and Coldwater River*" credited to H.A. Mantle. The departmental report for the FY 1972-73 states that the department had began studying the avalanche pattern that fiscal year (Ann Rpt, 1972/73, p. 24). A paper prepared by Harvey in 1981 gives the start of studies as 1972, and the Ministry's Brief to the Commission does too.
(Harvey IRF PAPER,1981, p. 13) (Brief)

*Source NDP, under CC by 2.0
https://www.flickr.com/photos/200636833@N02/53789406462/in/album-72177720317861160
**Basic ones

Lillooet Snubbed

According to Coquihalla Advocate Sherwin Kelly, Lillooet CoC was displeased with the decision to the Coquihalla over a Pemberton-Lillooet route to supplant the Trans-Canada through the Canyon. Although Lillooet newspapers were not accessible for this piece this confirms that Lillooet were seeking to have such a route made in 1973. Kelly's response to the Lillooet CoC is best summed in by the modern phrase "skill issue" (MH, Oct. 11, 1973, p. 1)

Canyon Congestion

The Ministry was keen to point out that the Coquihalla would alleviate traffic congestion on Highway 1 thru the Canyon. They predicted (in plain language) things weren't going to go well. Increasing congestion would clog the route, especially on weekends and holidays. (Harvey, IRF Paper)

In your wildest dreams

The people of Merritt had campaigned for a simple two-lane highway (like the Hope-Princeton or the Canyon). According to the Hope Standard and Merritt Herald of March 13, 1974, a six-lane highway was under environmental study according to a piece in the British Columbia Naturalist. Environmental concern was of course at the forefront for that article, and the piece's author commented that 17 bridges would be needed lest river diversions be carried out. The author pointed out that the project would clearly not be good for the fish stock. The northern terminus listed (via the Coquihalla of course) was Salmon Arm. As previously mentioned, the ministerial report of late 1973 considered a divided highway (i.e freeway) (MH, March 13, 1974, 1a). (HS, March 13, 1974, 1a)

A four-lane highway was good news for everyone. It could handle traffic.

(Langley Advance, Thu, Jul. 5, 1973, p. 14)

(Victory, VSun, Aug 13, 1973, p. 26)

The News is Not Great

On September 16, 1974, Graham Lea and Yale-Lillooet MLA Bill Hartley visited Merritt along with MLA Bill Hartley

Lea had news, not the best news, nor mortifying.
"The real need for the route is not pressed upon us now." (HS, Sep. 17, 1974, p. 7)

His government was shifting away from undertaking a lot of capital expenditure and focusing on maintaining existing roads.

It would be years before construction would actually start. Furthermore, liaising with the Dept. of Conservation and Recreation regarding the Coquihalla was floated. This gave some the impression of delays in the project, along with the 'need' comment..

On the brightside, he intended to drive the Coquihalla route after leaving. Whether he did or not was not ascertained by *Heaven Knows*.

(MH, Sept. 5, 1974, p. 4)

Pensive: more time has passed since the opening of the Coq and than the 37 years between it and the Hope-Princeton.

Look and Look

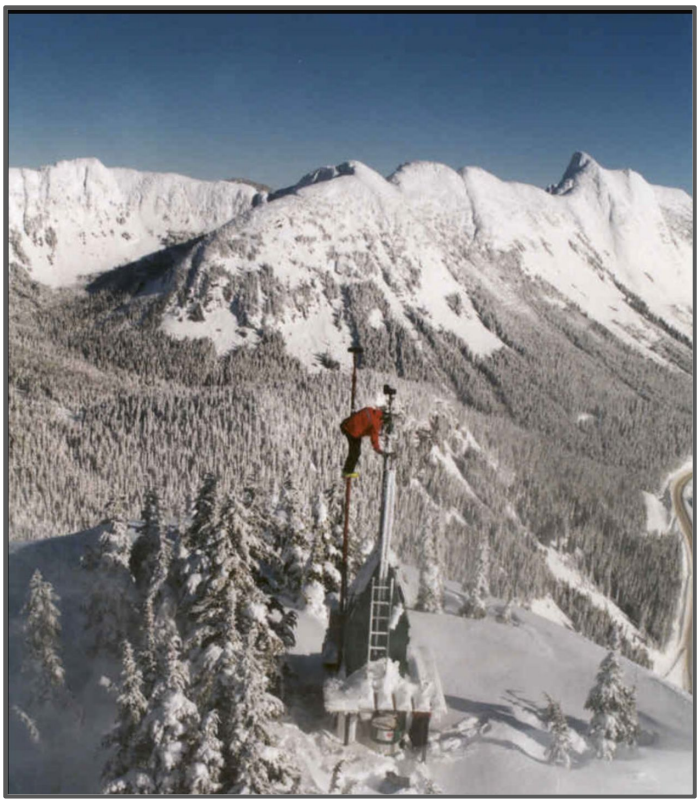
In 1973, an analysis of traffic demands was produced. Traffic forecasts on the Fraser Canyon suggested free-flowing traffic would be seriously curtailed because of the congestion along the two-lane w/ passing lanes route. The forthcoming congestion heavily incentivised them to consider widening the Canyon or to forge a new route. (Harvey, IRF Paper, pp. 3-7)

Since 1972 or 1973, the DoH had continued monitoring avalanches. The Coquihalla area receives very heavy snow and dangerous avalanche conditions. For example, the Ottomite area saw 737 cm metres of snowfall in January 1982. That's just in the month of January 1982!
(Weather Data for the Station from B.C. Gov't)(Coquihalla Story)

The year 1978 saw the completion of four different reports: the surficial geology (sand, dirt, gravel etc.) report in January; both the preliminary environmental report & Snow Avalanche Atlas report in June; (Chwk Prog. July 25, 1973, p. 8) and a second traffic analysis report in July. (Harvey, IRF Paper, 1981, p. 32) The alternative routes to the Coquihalla are also clearly outlined at the start of "20 Months Through the Mountains." The environmental side of things is also recounted there.

The preliminary env. report identified the four route options previously mentioned and rubber stamped the Coquihalla. It analysed the impacts on fish, wildlife forestry, mining, recreation, agriculture and local socio-economics. It also detailed that the plan was for the project to be completed in an 8-10 year schedule. (Prelim. Env., p. 2)

Aerial photography was obtained at different scales. 1:15,000; 1:5000; 1;6000 and 1:1000. Multiple routes were considered and drawn. The geological work along the route included diamond-tip drilling, test pitting and a plethora of methods to allow for analysing subsurface layers, Investigating aggregate sources, ascertaining the types of rocks and materials; slope angles, and structural competence. (Harvey, IRF Paper 1981, p. 13)



Radio Weather Station over Great Bear Snow Shed on Coquihalla
By BC MOTT USED UNDER
CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

The 1978 report chose the Coquihalla route instead of the other options. The (frankly) ridiculous Lillooet-Pemberton route was dropped immediately. It would've required massive reconstruction and was forecasted to not relieve traffic whatsoever. Coquihalla Senior Designer John H. Blackey was quoted as saying that the Lillooet-Pemberton option was only formally considered: "just so nobody said we should've built it there."
(MH, Jan. 23, 1985, p. 2A)

Widening the Canyon was also discarded due to extreme cost and severe interruption of traffic.

One of the reasons the modern Kamloops-Alberta widening takes to long is because they had to deal with traffic on the country's primary highway. It's far easier to manage traffic that doesn't exist!

Further, the Coquihalla had little property Impacts due to its greenfield nature.

heaven knows

Pemberton Lillooet Route Option Opinions

In the opinion of *Heaven Knows*, if the Lillooet-Pemberton option was chosen, it would've been more expensive, and required A LOT of reconstruction. The Sea-to-Sky upgrades would've been done in the 80s!

A two-lane paved road led to Pemberton (99). There was not even a paved highway past Mt. Currie & Hwy 99 had only been paved at the start of the decade. (Ann. Rpt. 1970/71, p. 43) The route would have required the upgrading of the Sea-to-Sky (then called the Garibaldi Highway). If widening was not carried out with the potential greenfield highway connection, it would surely need to be carried out eventually. On modern roads, 140 km of two-lane road would need to be widened or have a new route built. Using the Coquihalla route would require about 23 km to be upgraded near Cheam View and Hope to reach the respective proposed freeways.

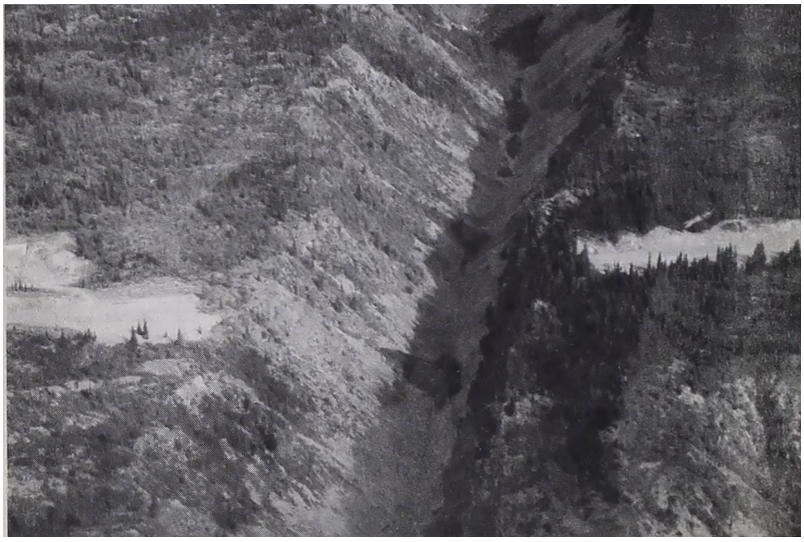
The Surrey Leader of June 23, 1977's fourth page has an editorial by the paper that holds a different view from us. To them, these describe the Coquihalla.

"An odd priority"
"Many ecological problems to solve... expensively"
"Tremendously expensive [in snow season]"
"Doesn't open a new route to the interior "
"But the Pemberton road can be driven now"
"Won't do as much damage"
"We need more highways to open up B.C.
"But the Pemberton Lillooet road is first priority"
The second priority was Bella Coola.
Moving walkway under Burrard Inlet anyone?

Objection! On Environmental Grounds

It's hard to say how respectful people were of the environment when the Coq was built. Looking back, we assume they weren't. At the time, with the building of the Coq, the Government loved to say they did, and indeed their actions seem to be enlightened compared to the disregard of days past

Michael M'Gonigle (who today is an environmental lawyer and UVic Professor) opined his opposition to the highway in the January 15, 1980 issue of the Vancouver Sun
He found the distance savings to not be worth the cost, and because of the flux of energy costs, the traffic demand for the route was low.



Dry Gulch, with the two contracts on either side
MH, July. 4, 1984, p. 1 Credit: Merritt Herald/Nicola Valley Museum

Potential resource exploration, risk to the steelhead and salmon would hurt the land. He thought the highway would disturb and degrade the heritage of the local First Nations, declaring "it will soon be only a subject to archaeologists". His opposition was acute, and the concerns legitimate. His consideration of First Nations was almost unheard of.
(Vsun, Jan 15, 1980, p. 5)

Credit where credit is due, the Chilcotin Highway was still 85%+ gravel. The walkway?
Good luck with that!

The Throne Speech *again?*

On January 13, 1977 the second session of the 31st Parliament of the B.C. Legislature began. Lieutenant-Governor Walter S. Owen delivered the Throne Speech, outlining the plans and priorities of the Bennett Government.

It was here that the Government announced they intended to build the Coquihalla, once again, and for real this time.

This time, the Socreds had elected to try to physically execute the idea instead of the prior short-lived NDP Government. Although they weren't going to build it quickly (yet). Ultimately, the Socreds would make good on the promise, for they had Alex Fraser.

Alex Fraser was a man (a real person believe it or not). He was Chairman (Mayor) of Quesnel and served as the MLA for Cariboo from 1969-1989.

He trucked the rough Fraser Canyon in the 30s, and was in the Army Service Corps during WW2. (Hansard, March 8, 1988, p. 3350)

In the qualified opinion of Heaven Knows, his tenure as Highways Minister can only be beaten by one other man: Phil Gaglardi. He gets pretty close! Opening after opening, contract after contract, consideration after consideration, he left his legacy - one that goes unmentioned because he wrote it quietly. Perhaps him being more reserved than Gaglardi though has been detrimental to the legacy?

"During the latter part of 1976 the highway reconstruction and resurfacing programme was intensified to help stop the deterioration of our existing highway system. This programme will continue during 1977. Traffic counts on all highways, however, continue to grow at astonishing rates. This tends to reduce the desired level of service for our people. The Trans-Canada Highway, in the summer months particularly, is overcrowded and indications are that it will get worse. My government will continue to add additional passing lanes where practical to temporarily improve the level of service."

"In the long run, however, I am advised a new route is needed from the interior to the coast. The last major new highway route to the coast in the southern part of the province was the Hope-Princeton Highway, which was completed 28 years ago, in 1949. For these reasons, my government has directed my Minister of Highways and Public Works to proceed as soon as possible with the design and construction of a highway from Merritt to Hope through the Coquihalla Pass. This will require the construction of 70 miles of new highway."

R.G. Harvey was Deputy Minister of Highways at the time of the Throne Speech announcement. Retrospectively In his book The Coast Connection,, he expressed that the announcement came as a surprise to him.

Some weeks before, he had added his suggestions for items to be included in the throne speech. According to him, no mention was made of the Coquihalla.

He wrote that:
"I had been given no indication of interest either from my new Minister or from the new Premier. The latter immediately suspected to be the sponsor of this initiative."

(Harvey, C.C., p. 187)

This second promise was eventually met with action.

Coquihalla Lakes,
June 1984

Credit: Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald
MH, May 14, 1986

"...my government has directed my Minister of Highways and Public Works to proceed as soon as possible with the design and construction of a highway from Merritt to Hope through the Coquihalla Pass."

-Walter S. Owen

COST Estimates

Costs?

The cost estimations done on the Coquihalla have become infamous. By themselves to the public eye, they aren't. It's what they contributed to that's become infamous - that being the overruns. The carelessness and lack of planning involved with the estimates is in-of-itself, completely infamous.

In its dealings, the McKay Commission constructed a timeline of estimated costs, and the earliest evidence of a cost was from a DoH personnel member accompanying the first Coquihalla Caravan. This estimate was very rudimentary and was pegged to be $10-11 million. It's unclear if that is for a two-lane or four-lane highway.

The 1973 Mantle Report figured $60 million for a divided highway, including construction and property under a ten-year timeframe. (Inq, p. 9) Several increased amounts were put forth without much footing until 1979. One of these was a $140 million figure based on rudimentary per km estimates.*

It was then that the $250 million figure was established. No new evidence, just updated figures based on estimates with adjustments for final alignment costs. (Inq., p. 9)

Fraser had previously stated it would be $250 million in Nov. 1977. (HS, Nov. 9, 1977, p. 1)

The Commission also provides that the figure was first published on Nov. 10, 1978 (Inq. viii)

At a meeting in 1984, high level officials confirmed $250 million, according to Mick G. Elston, Executive Director of Construction.

The $125 million for Kamloops, had little basis. It was reportedly based on a revision of a consultant's mapping work. (Inq., p. 10)

If you're observant, you might have noticed it is also half the price. Talk about lazy

*Fraser mentioned such a figure in June 1977.

Design

The Mantle Report of 1973 prescribed the following specifications

Mantle

Design Speed: 70 MPH (113 km/h)
Dual Carriageway, with each being 34 ft (~10.36 m) including 10 ft (~3.05 m) shoulders and two 12 ft (3.6576 m) lanes
Grass Median 44 ft (13.411 m) in width.
Note 1978 Preliminary Environmental Report Lists pp. 26-27 gives 100 km/h as a minimum standard

Final Product

Design Speed 110 km/h
Dual Carriageway, with two or three lanes, 3.6 m or 3.7 m in width;
Right shoulders: variable, sometimes virtually absent on tighter portions, but given as 2.0 m (Coquihalla Story)
1.6 m (Harvey, C.C., p. 191) or sometimes narrower;
Median Shoulders 1.2-1.5 m

Coq facts
Expenditures for:

Property Acquisitions: $1,788,149
Surveys (General) $1,640,866
Design and Surveys: $9,119,910
(Brief, Appx B)

Costs cont.

In June 1977 after opening a highway project reconstructing the Hunter Creek bluffs, Fraser pitched a $140 million figure based on a 2 million/mile figure (including payroll). (HS, Jun. 15, 1977, p. 1)

Specified?

On November 4, 1977**,** whilst in Abbotsford, Fraser reaffirmed that the highway was going ahead. The highway was going to cost $250 million and on November 7 he intended to announce tenders at Merritt. (HS, Nov. 9, 1977, p. 1) (Prov. Nov. 5, 1977, p. 1)

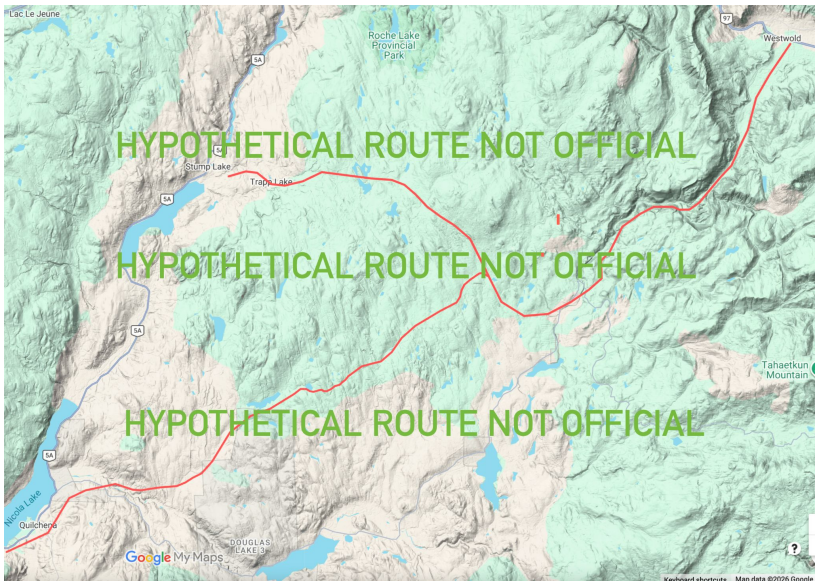
The four lane Coq would meet the Merritt-Kamloops highways which would be widened to four lanes. That would be accomplished within eight years (1985 or 86).

A proposed four lane route from Merritt to Three Valley Gap, with a spur to Peachland was also mentioned. The Three Valley Gap proposal was lobbied for by North Okanagan communities, but was never built. It is a fundamentally strange idea, because how could a new highway be built from the North Okanagan to Three Valley Gap?

Fraser acknowledged opposition to the highway from environmentalists and cattlemen in the Nicola Valley. The traffic in the Canyon meant the highway still had to go ahead. He wanted to obtain cost-sharing from the federal government, although no such agreement or commitment had been made. It was expected several snowsheds would be required through the Boston Bar Creek Valley, with construction costing $4 million per mile ($2.485 million/km) at times.
(Prov. Nov 5, 1977, p. 1) (NDN, Nov. 5, 1977, p. 3) (See Cost)
.
In Merritt, Fraser opened a newly widened and revamped Nicola Avenue. He told reporters he expected the first ten mile contract to be awarded around April 1, 1978. He reiterated the grand plans around the Three Valley Gap, Peachland and the widened Kamloops highway. (HS, Nov 9, 1977, p. 1)

Fraser's Comments

A widened Merritt - Kamloops Highway (5A)
A Merritt - Peachland route
A route "from the Okanagan valley joining the Trans-Canada Highway at Three-Mile Gap.



Three Valley Gap Stump Lake or Quilchena to Westwold
By Heaven Knows Staff - Drawn in 10 minutes

Three Valley Gap?

The Ministry initially looked to to widening Highway 5A to connect Kamloops to Phase I

In Summer 1984, Princeton, Osoyoos and Penticton began to promote a cutoff across the North Okanagan from around Quilchena to Three Valley. How it would go through the Shuswap remains a mystery.

Naturally, the City of Kamloops objected because it would effectively take the city off the Trans-Canada. (Salmon Arm Observer, July 18, 1984, p. 15) Ashcroft laid their support behind Kamloops, (Ashcroft Journal, Aug 14, 1984, p. 2).

The idea was brought up again when consultation began for the route of the Okanagan Connector. (Heaven Knows/Keg, Draft for History of Okanagan Connector, May 2026)

In July 1985 former caravan organizer and businessman Henry Norgaard wrote the Merritt Herald predicting that the Douglas Lake - Westwold Enderby Highway would be realised one day, and it would an ideal truck route due to its flat profile. (MH, Jul 3, 1985, p 3B)

Cliff Michael, who succeeded Alex Fraser as Highways Minister in 1986, told a group of Salmon Armers in 1985 that the possibility of a highway from Enderby to Three Mile Gap had no mind paid to it by the Province. (Salmon Arm Observer, Aug. 28, 1985, p. 1)

Fraser's 'around April 1' figure passed by.,,

July 23 saw Tom Waterland tell Coquihalla caravaners that the specifications for the tender were going to be completed in August (HS, July 25, 1978, pp. 1, 5)

A pinky promise this time: Tom Waterland announced on Oct. 24 that the tenders were to be let by December 1, something which Alex Fraser had proclaimed at the Social Credit Convention on October 20. (HS, Oct. 25, 1978, p. 1)

On November 29, 1978. Tenders were finally opened.

Sorry, that was what was originally said - December 6, 1978!

The companies that provided contractors bonds asked they move the date because another project was being called the same day. If the same company won both, then the bond might not have covered both of them. (HS, Dec. 6, 1978, p. 1)

C-3760, Peers Creek - Nicolum Creek. 194,000 tonnes of gravel, 2814 linear feet (857.71 m) of culvert
(HS, Nov. 15, 1978, p. 1) (CHWK Prog. Nov. 15, 1978, p. 4)

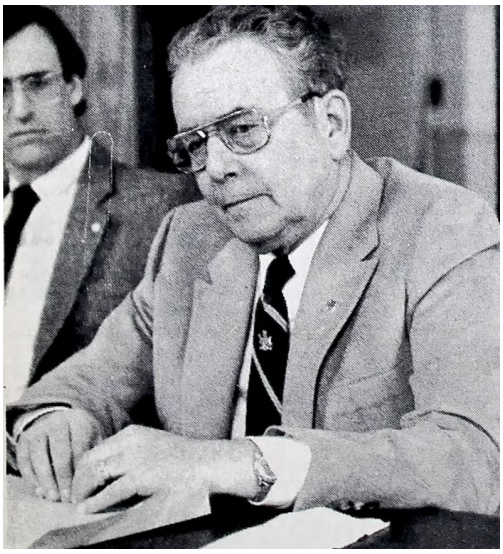
On December 20, Emil Anderson won with a $4,279,333 low bid. Twelve bids were placed by various firms. They were informed on December 28, 1978. Work was to begin in March. (HS, Jan. 3, 1979, p,. 1)

Part of the project included diverting the Coquihalla River at Schoolhouse Bend* Here, the ministry would be able to gauge how the work would affect steelhead and forge best practices. The work on this bend would become the template for further river relocations and the Ministry was quite proud of it. It even won them an environmental award. The Ministry would go on to carry on many more such diversions

Steelhead were considered very important, with the Coquihalla being one of three streams harbouring the fish in the Lower Mainland. The steelhead population had been in steady decline. A restocking program was initiated, facilitating an increase in their numbers. The fish people looked after the fish.

After the Schoolhouse diversion, the Ministry revised and expanded its protection, mitigation and enhancement practices. (MH, Sept. 26, 1984 6A) It even won the Ministry an award from the B.C. Engineer's Association in April 1982. (The Times, Nanaimo, Apr. 27, 1982, p. 16A)

***This is the 90 deg. curve just south of Peers Creek, and the first Coq River bridge; just north of where the highway washed out at Othello**



Alex Fraser, April 1986
Credit: Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald
MH, May 14, 1986

Fraser visited Hope on April 17, 1979. He was asked whether the two-lane sections of the Trans-Canada Highway would be widened. He answered that they would need to be four-lanes by the time the Coquihalla was built, and they were secondary to the Coq. He further explained that 12 outstanding properties needed to be negotiated to allow for the highway's expansion. (HS, March 21, 1979, pp. 1-8)

The Prophet?

The day before the tender was let, the Victoria Times ran a story about a citizens' study. Derrick Mallard, president of the organisation Citizens Association to Save the Environment (CASE) conducted a study looking at the Coquihalla. Mallard detailed that the Coquihalla would cost $500,000,000, double the estimated price of Phase 1. He urged a moratorium be imposed, and the rationale explained. (Victoria Times, Dec. 5, 1978, p. 7)

On Jan. 2, CASE publicized a $1.07 billion dollar figure for the highway. By extrapolating C-0760's estimated cost to the whole route. This was an error and Mallard chose to resign as president due to it. (ibid, January 3, 1979, p. 7)His resignation was rejected by the board and it appears he stayed on,
(ibid, Jan 20, 1979, p. 2)(ibid May 17, 1979, p. 52)

EXPO - and the projects that follow.

In 1980, Vancouver was selected as the host for Expo 86 (then Transpo 86). This presented a chance for Vancouver to move itself from a provincial town to a city with global recognition. With the hosting of such an event, any opportunity and “excuse’’ is made for the building of capital infrastructure. This phenomenon was repeated in 2010 with the Canada Line and the Sea-to-Sky upgrades.

The opportunity was a monumental success.

For Expo there was a feast of projects. What did Vancouver get? Skytrain, B.C. Place, Science World, Canada Place, Cambie, MCBARGE? If these things disappeared, Vancouver would lose its Vancouver-ness. It'd possibly have far fewer denizens too.

At the same time, the Alex Fraser and the Annacis Freeway system were also being developed. In the interior, the Northeast Coal program saw massive investment, with a new rail line and highway connecting the new town of Tumbler Ridge and its coal being drawn-up. The Province was wrapping up upgrading Highway 23 to the Mica Dam in preparation for the Revelstoke Dam.

The Coquihalla would be a piece of its legacy, but what if…

Coldwater Bypass

The MOTH intended to have the Coquihalla run lower in the Coldwater RIver Valley inland of its east bank. This would’ve disturbed Coldwater I.R. 1 and ranching. The Nicola Valley Stock Breeders Assoc. and the Indian Band fought against this proposal. Surveys stopped at Kingsvale in 1982 (Harvey, C.C., p. 188)

Studies

A geotechnical evaluation of alternative routes for the Merritt to Kingsvale section was produced in August 1980.

The Coldwater Indian Band had a hydrological study done by ICG consultants. A report of the socio-community Impact was being worked on in FY 1982/83. The FY 1983/84 report mentions a consultant was retained to carry out an environmental impact study. It’s not clear if the above two are the same study. Buchanan, R.G, Nyland, Dirk. “Preliminary Geotechnical Evaluation Alternative Route Selection Merritt to Kingsvale Coquihalla Highway.” B.C. MOTH Geotechnical and Materials Branch, August 1980 .

The Ministry ordered low level mapping done of the bypass route in FY 1982/83 and high-order maps were obtained in FY 1983/84.

In 1982 or 1983 (best estimate) the decision was made for the Coquihalla to take a high route across the bluffs above the Coldwater Indian Reserve and the lower lands in the valley bottom. The decision was the result of conversation with the potentially affected parties. Rerouting avoided disturbing the community, cattle ranching and near eliminate of property interference. The Ministry has a history of interference with reserve lands. In fact, a large chunk of FOI requests submitted under the ministry’s prevue (Harvey, C.C. p. 188

Cont. p, 33)

Before the Great, Came the Bad *Recession*

The early 1980s saw a recession felt throughout the world and profoundly in British Columbia. Today, this is known as the "1980-82 recession"

The recession killed progress on the Coquihalla Highway's construction. The Sun reported Alex Fraser had said in November 1981 that "financial restraints may delay construction of the...Coquihalla Highway..." (Vsun, Dec. 1, 1981, p A1) That 'may' was actually a 'will'.

The Provincial Government chose austerity.

Emil Anderson had finished up their work on the Boston Bar Creek - Dry Gulch section around Halloween 1982 (HS, Nov. 3, 1982, p. 5). Another contract was let to Dawson Construction in 1983. That was all though.

Bennett's No-Good Black Thursday

On July 7, 1983 the Socred Gov't passed sweeping austerity reforms that resulted from the restraint campaign Bennett ran for the May election. The human rights commission and others were abolished and taxes,enancy, wage, labour and other laws were amended. People went ballistic with rage as the new laws were repressive. Labour movements and others launched Operation Solidarity in July and the situation calmed down in November. This is no doubt an example of the economic strife that slowed the Coquihalla down.

"Solidarity: The Largest Political Protest in British Columbia's History". BC Labour Heritage Centre, Community Stories https://www.communitystories.ca/v2/solidarity-bc-protest_solidarite-protestation-cb/

NINETEEN-EIGHTY-FOUR

Coming out of last year's mess

In February 1984, B.C. had a 14.5% seasonally adjusted unemployment rate, (Vsun, Mar. 19, 1984, A10) meaning 212,000 of the 1,367,000 strong provincial labour force had no work. (NDN, Mar. 9, 1984, p. 1). That was not the lowest point considering the recession, but it was still a bleak picture.

The B.C. Professional Engineers' Association said in March 1984 that 16.5% of professional engineers were 'effectively unemployed. The association's perspective was this was a clear indication of a lack of capital projects. (ASM Advertiser Edition, Mar.. 24, 1984, p. 12)

An avalanche turret, pictured in 2012 by Beth77 Unnamed by Beth77 **CC BY-NC-ND 2.0**

SPRING 1984 saw a series of controversial moves stalked the government of Bill Bennett. On March 19 he floated the potential of the cancellation of Expo 86 after a gongshow over non-unionized labour at the Expo-site had dominated politics. He escalated, saying the government was prepared to cancel Expo in a televised address on March 29. A 20-mill pulp industry strike resulted in the passage of "back-to-work" legislation forcing an end to it. He was in hot water with unions over it all, on-top of wrecked economy. Cabinet needed to strategize - quick and fast. (NDN, Mar. 30, 1984, p. 1) (Vsun, Mar. 29, 1984, A1 Yes! Bill Bennett threatened to cancel Expo.

Cowichan Bay

Late April 1984

From Friday, April 27 to Sunday, April 29, 1984, Bennett and his Cabinet took a 'retreat' to Cowichan Bay Inn near Duncan on the Island. Labour issues were clearly at the forefront. In his reporting, Charles La Vertu of Canadian Press explained Bennett's position: ***"his government was working on ways to expand the economy and attract the investment that will lead to long term job creation in the Province.."***
(AVT, Apr. 30, 1984, p. 4)

.

Furthermore, the Times Colonist of May 1, 1984 (p, 1) details that Bennett ***"said he was trying to create the type of policies, climate and aggressive action needed to stimulate job-creation."***

What better for job creation than a project estimated to create 10,600 direct ones and a further 15,900 indirectly?

The headline in the Toronto Star of April 21, 1984 (B4), gives a good clue as to the situation without fixating on hyper detail: "Bennett vs. Labor Turning Into a Rout" gives. "We won't lay down and die' says unions" in the Hamilton Spectator of April 28, 1984, B1.

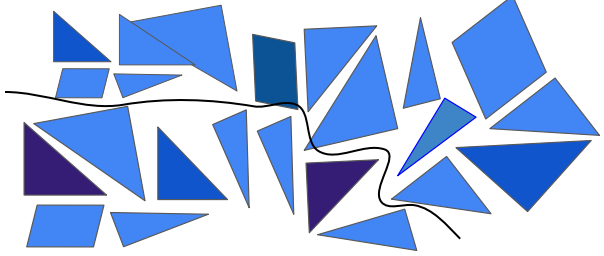
Intra-national news!

The MOTH had valid concerns that Expo would further jam up highways. Lasting potential exposure of B.C. to the outside world was also feared as a becoming factor contributing to congestion on highways. They believed that the rise in traffic from 1985 to 1986 would be 37%. In the Fraser Canyon. (Brief, p.20)

A stimulating project to boost to employment of workers and engineers, a morale booster, which would meet the traffic demands of Expo and the forthcoming years. It would leave a legacy, a big one.

The trigger was pulled. The Premier and his Cabinet had said that by Expo, the highway would be complete. The countdown had started, and a race was now to be run. The Coquihalla, had now been fast-tracked - act...

The Works
Fast, Quick, Quicker



April 30, 1984 was a Monday, the first working day after Cabinet chose to accelerate the highway. Who knows what the reaction was in the offices of the Ministry. They'd been given a herculean task like no other ever given in Provincial history. Build a freeway in two-years across a mountain range across avalanche paths and rivers. Had such an ask ever been given, ever?

At that point, only 18.5 km of grading was finished.
(Harvey, C.C. p. 188)

Both Executive Director of Construction Mick Elston and Bridge Director Len Johnson were made aware of this fact almost instantaneously.
(Commission Transcript, Len Johnson, pp. 328, 330; M.G. Elston, pp 469-470)

It is probable that all high-level personnel were informed ASAP due to the urgency of the fast-tracking. To get things done, short-cuts were needed - ergo, "fast-tracking" the project!

Drawings had to be rushed out, atypical modifications and clauses added to contracts. On-site physical modifications wouldn't be uncommon - and that was something that would lead to a level of infamy.

Design surveys -
Design process at March 31, 1984
(one month before fast-tracking)
Completion Progress for Design Processes
Preliminary study/Study/Design

Jones Creek - Wahleach n.g/80%/42%
Hope-Nicolum Creek n.g./80%/21%
Peers Creek s.3 - 10 Mile Creek n.g/100%/94%
10 Mile Creek - Sowaqua Creek s.5 n.g/98%/63%
Sowaqua Creek - Ladner Creek s.6 n.g/90%/89%
Ladner Creek - Portia s.7: 90%/n.g./5%
Portia-Boston Bar Summit s.8 - s.11: *31%/n.s/n.s*
Mine Creek - Juliet s. 15: n.g./90%/32%
Juliet Creek - Brodie: 100%/100%/n.s.
Broke - Kingsvale:57%/47%/n.s.
Kingsvale - Merritt 40%/n.s./n.s.
Merritt Bypass: 94%/85%/n.s.

Phase II Merritt Kamloops
7% prelim survey

Stage 2 Environmental Reports
Hope-Lear 73% Prelim
Lear-Dewdney Creek 6% Prelim

N.g.not given in report
N.s. not started
(Ann Rpt. 1983/84, pp. 223-229)

Cont. from p. 30
Interestingly, from FY 1982/83 to FY 1983/84, the preliminary survey work on the Kingsavle - Merritt section went from 90% to 40%. Did they change the routing?

By the end of FY 1984, all sections had been designed. For Phase two, its seven sections were 5-15% designed, with the exception of two being 30% and 98% finished. (Ann. Rpt. 1984/85, p. 183)

In testifying before the McKay Commission, Len Johnson, Bridge Branch Director recalled the first bridge site report was received at the branch office on May 4, 1984. The usage of consultants was expressly ordered to expedite design. (Commission Transcript, p. 328)

In the May 17 issue of the B.C. Gazette, the Province advertised the Floods-Hope Bypass; C-0760 Peers Creek - Ten Mile Creek, and C-2663 Ten Mile Creek-Sowaqua Creek. Things had to get moving quickly and designs needed to follow suit.

Respectively, plans for these projects were available on May 28, May 16, and May 23. Opening dates were set at June 15, June 8, and June 12. (B.C. Gazette, May 17, 1984, pp. 665-666)

C-0760 was awarded to Emil Anderson June 14. (Inq, A30) Interestingly, though metric road signs had been installed in September 1977, construction contracts were still being executed in imperial after that point (Prior knowledge) C-3760, the first contract, C-0760 and two other first Phase I accelerated projects were designed in imperial measurements. This suggests the Ministry had sat on these contracts until now, which is verified by looking at the design progress percentages in the annual reports.

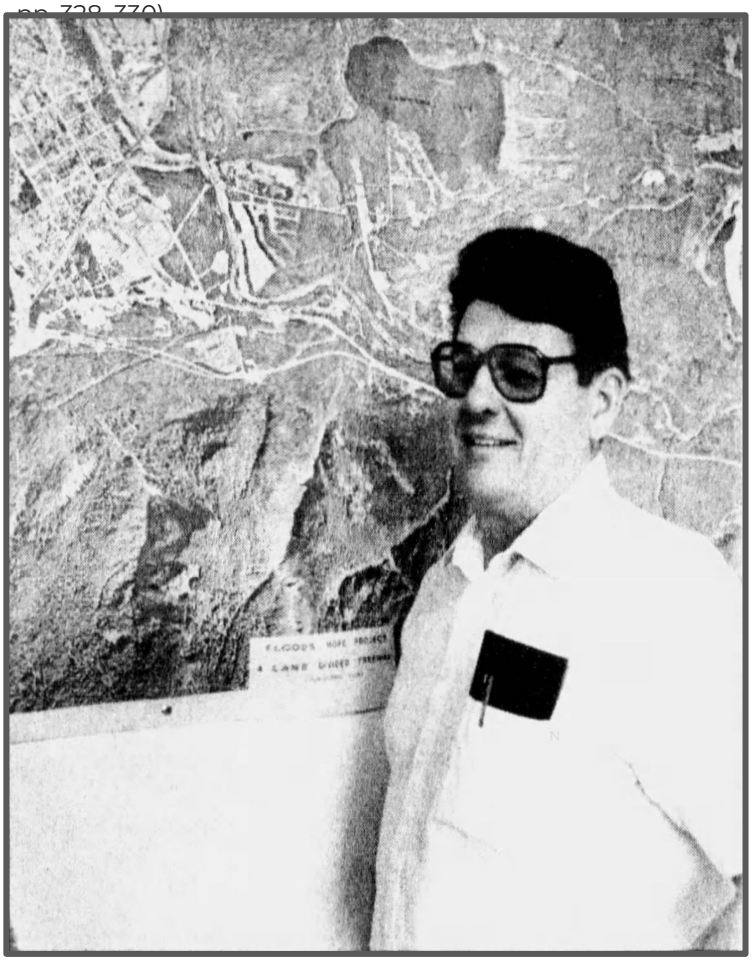
Anderson was a Hope-based firm, and should have been able to get crews on-site quickly.

Just as the first post-acceleration contract was let, the Merritt Bypass at the north end Phase I was just going to the drafting stage. N.D. Lea were retained to design the Coldwater Interchange to Nicola Interchange section along with its three bridges. (MH, Jun. 13, 1984, p 1A)
Their work would continue for some months after.

The Ministry's house design sections could never handle the project alone given the timeframe. They resorted to retaining a plethora of different design consultants (Inq, p. 24) for grading, bridges along environmental consultants. As previously mentioned, design on many of the sections occurred whilst others were under intense construction. (Inq, pp. 24-25)

The Ministry recruited consultants off of lists.

The Bridge Branch collated a list of consultants, with ones that they had previously worked with at the top. They called them one-by-one asking for their services. The Ministry used a rush markup factor of 1.75 because of the fast-tracking. (Commission Transcript, Len Johnson, pp. 328-330)



Dennis Chisholm (pictured here in 1986) was the direct manager/supervisor for Phase I. He faced personal tragedy during construction
(Hope Standard, May 14, 1986, p. 13)

Highlighting the Rush

Contracts awarded per month, Phase I - Nicolum Creek-Nicola I/C

June 1984 - 1
July - 2
August - 1
September - 2
October - 2
November - 2
December - 3
January 1985 - 6 (4* in Coldwater Valley)
February - 1
FY end = March 31, 1985

1984: 13 \ 1985: 7
20 major Grading Projects awarded in seven months!
Excludes armadillo culvert contract 2810-0001
16 Phase II projects were also on the drawing board.

Unprecedented Virgin Tendering Territory

B.C. awarded seven (7) construction contracts in two fiscal-years for the Rogers Pass Connection. The Federal Government let eight (8, but the year they were awarded couldn't be ascertained. Four (4) B.C. contracts were awarded in 1958/59 alone.

On the Fraser Canyon, the previous
The period inclusive of FY 1955/56 to FY 1959/60 (5-years) saw 17 construction contracts awarded. Five (5) contracts were awarded both in FY 1956/57 and FY 1959/60.
Note, one canyon contract may have been excluded from the data and was lost)

Five (5) contracts on the Lower Mainland TCH were awarded in FY 1959/60

Hwy 99 from Ladner to the U.S. Border saw six (6) contracts from FY 1960/61 to FY 1961/62 with four (4) awarded in FY 1961/62. An additional contract was let the next FY.

The Ministry had never done something like this before. Projects were handled on a contract-by-contract basis usually. Corridor-based projects like those listed never came close to having 20 contracts called in such a period of time.

It seeps through! The Signs of Acceleration

In c. late April - very early May 1983 during a provincial election cycle, Waterland commented that he wanted to see the Coquihalla completed by the time Expo 86 was finished. He wanted federal involvement too. (HS, May 4, 1983, p.1, 14) It is vital to note that Waterland had clearly thought of the idea. Someone in Cabinet had the idea in their head.

In Sept. 1983, Fraser told the Merritt Herald he'd be delighted to get $10M for the project and a "windfall" would be needed for a 1986 completion date. (MH, Sep. 28, 1983, p. 1)

The Waterman
On May 12, 1984, Tom Waterland announced that tenders were going to be called for two sections of the Coquihalla in a Catholic Church in Merritt.

"There is an acceleration of highway contracts."
He decreed that there were no promises that the highway was going to be finished for Expo, and reiterated his support for tolls. (MH, May 16, 1984, p. 1)

In the aftermath of the announcement of tenders having been advertised, the Hope Standard got word of the plan to accelerate the highway. They asked Waterland about it, and he told them "from nothing to something is acceleration." It appears the Standard didn't find much else in their inquisition, although their suspicions were completely founded. (HS, May 16, 1986, p. 1)

When asked by a radio station in Kamloops around the beginning of June, he did not deny the rumours. (MH, June 6, 1984, p. 1)

Clearly, rumours were floating about.

Publicly Announcing:

THE COQUIHALLA HIGHWAY

Dishonest Denial!

Bennett was holding a press conference in Abbotsford on June 25. There, he told the world that the Coquihalla was not going to be accelerated, and would be completed in a decade or so.

"We would need a dramatic decision by government to accelerate that...it would need a major change."
(Bennett June 25, 1984, acrd. Hope Standard)

Bennett very clearly lied. He put completion as being 10-12 years distant (1994 to 1996)
(HS, Jun. 27, 1984, p. 1)
(Ashcroft Journal, Jul. 10, 1984, p. 10)

Tom Waterland decided to throw shade. He wasn't going to comment on some "press interpretation of what somebody else said" as he told the Merritt Herald. A source was reported to have told the Similkameen Spotlight in Princeton that the target was Expo 86.

Waterland claimed he had no idea of a time frame except that in 1977 it was it'd be done over a 8-10 year period. Outrageously, he claimed he had "No indications from [Alex] Fraser that any more contracts will be forthcoming this year." (MH, July. 4, 1984, p. 1)

By the acceleration announcement people in Hope and Merritt knew that Coquihalla construction had accelerated & work had been already been ongoing along the Coquihalla for about 3-4 months. It had been 3 months and 12 days since the first contract was let. Mayor Jim Rabbitt of Merritt believed it would be accelerated. The businessmen, citizens and politicians alike "knew".

(CBC TV Report, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/coquihalla-highway-archives-history-1.3977333

Merritt B.C.
Morning of Sept. 26, 1984

"[it's] pretty special. We've been talking of it for a while, and now it's a reality." Alex Fraser, Sept. 26, 1984

I'm back in the Merritt S.R. - Bennett arrives at Merritt, Sep. 25, 1984
Credit: Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald MH, May 14, 1986

On September 19, 1986, Bill Bennett confirmed to the press that he was going to hold a cabinet meeting at Merritt on September 26. The Legislature had just held an emergency session on the 13th because of a weeks-long transit strike in Vancouver. (Hansard, https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/overview/33rd-parliament/2nd-session/debate-transcripts)

In 1983, a ban was placed on cabinet meetings being held outside of Victoria. That provision was lifted just before going to Merritt because Bennett sought to "provide a measure of accessibility to British Columbians."(Prov. Sep. 25, 1984, p. 10) (AVT/CP, Sep. 25, 1984, p.2) *Perhaps there was something special about to happen for all British Columbians.*

The Cabinet meeting was slated to be held at the Valnicola Hotel. The Herald reported they'd get to Merritt via plane at around 4:00 pm on the 25th and have a breakfast hosted by Mayor Jim Rabbitt at the Grasslands Hotel the next morning at 7:30 am. At 9:30 am, they'd return to Valnicola with the city council to begin discussing local issues. Departure was slated for 2:30 pm. (MH, Sep. 19, 1984, 1A)

Publicly Announcing:
THE COQUIHALLA HIGHWAY

" [the] Most ambitious project this ministry has undertaken in the past 15 years. The difficulties are tremendous."

Alex Fraser, Sept. 26, 1984

THE morning of September 26 dawned at the Grasslands Hotel. At the formal breakfast, Bennett made the announcement to the c.140 attendees, the press and indirectly to the world.

It was here that Bennett announced the Coquihalla would be tolled. Pointers included the shorter distance saving 20 million litres of fuel per year and $40 million in user operating costs. No traffic would be held up compared to reconstructing the Canyon. Since it would be a freeway, there would be no harsh curvature as found on the Canyon route.

Apparently, there would be 30% savings on contract prices (which went well). It would be environmentally sound, carve a third doorway into the interior, open up opportunities, and bring industry.
Aside from that, its greenfield nature meant little property acquisition and disruption of existing development. Some 50 pipeline relocations would be necessary. Westcoast Transmission had just been awarded a contract to Albertan Majestic Contractors to relocate portions of their line(s). (MH, Sep. 19, 1984, 1A) (MH, Sep. 26, 1984, 1A) On the widened Trans-Canada, the CN Railway would need relocation.

NEWS RELEASE

RELEASE DATE: September 26, 1984

CONTACT: Dave Laundy
387-1337

In the field.
Along the Coquihalla, work camps started to pop up. Work trailers, portables and even motorhomes made up the camps spaced along the route.

Positive effects on the local service industry were going to be felt because of the influx of workers to the area. The demand for goods needed to be met and doing so would allow for the fast-tracking to succeed.

By October, hotels in Merritt were slammed (MH, Oct. 17, 1984, p. 1A)

The Hope Standard profiled the camp that Dawson ran at Coquihalla Lake. At the time, it could accommodate 150 workers. It had provisions for satellite TV, a games room and cafeteria to serve the workforce. Food was served in 3-classes and dessert was available. Consumption of milk was put at 70 litres/day and eggs at 15 dozen (180) a day. This was one of many camps operated by different firms. (HS, Nov. 14, 1984, p. 16)

Announcing the Coquihalla Grasslands Hotel Merritt, Sept. 26, 1984

"Announcement of the Coquihalla Phase 1" by B.C. MOTT
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The Barrier Dry Gulch

The summit and Dry Gulch area sees the biogeoclimatic landscape change from the wet coastal hemlock to a subalpine spruce dominated area that has harsher interior winters.

"Biogeoclimatic Zones of British Columbia." Ministry of Forests, 2014. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/ecosystems/bec/maps/bgcmap201608.pdf

There were two contracts on either side of Dry Gulch that had been awarded and entirely or partially finished *sans* gravel and paving before acceleration. Due to this, R.G. Harvey uses this as a division point between the two climates in-addition with it being a massive chasm as a natural boundary between the Hope (southern) and Merritt (northern) sides. It is a logical place, especially since it is a massive gorge. The vegetation and climate truly does shift.

(Harvey, C.C. p. 189)

The resident fish dictated that river diversions could only be done from July 15 to September 15. Contractors had to move quickly with both care and skill. The Coquihalla and Boston Bar area diversions and in-stream work were completed by late Fall 1984, but the Coldwater diversions weren't done by that point

That meant that no work could be carried out and it looked like they'd missed their shot. Plans were not ready, and the salmon were spawning.

The MOTH convinced the DFO to proceed under stringent standards, allowing for two diversions and all six crossings (the footings) to be completed. (Brief, p. 28-30, 35). These intrusions into the Coldwater were worked upon by a single contractor. (Ibid p. 35).

Work was completed in the months of November and December, saving valuable time and allowing contractors to continue . (Brief, p. 29)

One of the pre-acceleration projects needed to be redone to accommodate the wide toll booth which was not... included in the original project (Brief, Phase 1 Grading)

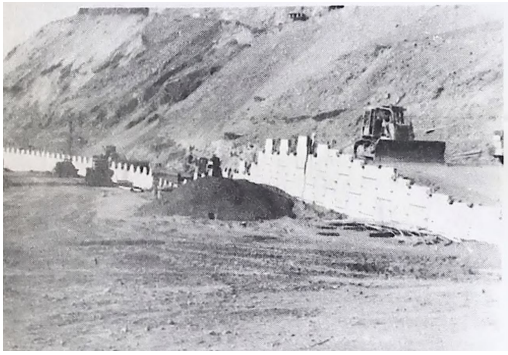
Dawson Construction was charged with both the toll booth grading and the waterworks executed in the Coldwater River (ibid)

Aggregate production began by Fall. (Inq, Appendix Datafile A). The grading contracts on the southern side progressed through the winter of 84-85. The northern side saw no earth & grading work until Spring 1985 because the area went into prohibitive "deep freeze". Two clearing and grubbing contracts were executed on the Northern section in Fall 1984 to clear select sections. Grading contracts north of Dry Gulch were called from Nov. to Feb in-lieu of springtime. Because of the freeze, all that could be done was rock work, along with the excavation and moving unsuitable material (Brief, p. 26). Every opportunity to do any amount of work had to be taken because of the fast-track decision.

The most nightmarish section of the Coquihalla to engineer and construct was the portion through the Boston Bar Creek valley. The soil in the earth was unstable and could not be used for the highway grade or fill. Its high mountains which threw down fearsome avalanches every winter stood silently.

The highway had to be threaded like a needle along the valley to provide it the best protection against avalanches and keep it above the snowpack. It needed to use the western and northern sides of the valley as to expose it to the sun year-round, so ice and snow could melt from its rays. The specified design speed and minimum grade width of 24 m needed to be observed, and climbing lanes were found to necessary. The solution to these problems ended up creating one of the most infamous hill-climbs in the country, the 8% grade up to Zopkios (1 in 12.5). Such grades have tortured truckers for four-decades now.

Dawson Const. Camp nearer to Larson Hill Credit Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald MH, May 14, 1986 a60



Retaining Walls Credit Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald MH, May 14, 1986

Fox Farm Road near Merritt, 1985 - Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald MH, May 14, 1986

It looks like Phase I was a fine-tuned, well scheduled, must-have-done-or-else project

"The ground is "bony," full of rock and boulders to the point where mere dirt has to be blasted loose with explosives. There is no gravel in the valley, and the earth turns to mulch during incessant rains, so fill must be trucked in…"

-Reporter Vaughn Palmer describing the Boston Bar Creek Area, Vancouver Sun, May 29, 1985, A4

The unsuitable soil meant that fill had to be "borrowed" from other sections - meaning it was trucked in, increasing costs and wasting fuel.
(Harvey, C.C., p. 192)
(Ann. Rpt. 1985/86, Coquihalla progress)

A Bad Solution

Engineers thought they had come up with a perfect solution to use materials from avalanche basins in the Boston Bar creek valley as borrow for highway fills.
The plan was to use material from areas where avalanche containment basins/structures were being excavated as fill.. Unfortunately, that plan led to cost overruns because in the end as fill had to be borrowed from other locations. *Why?*

The fill was not suitable. and the MOTH made mistakes in not thoroughly investigating the avalanche-borrowing spots well enough. (Harvey, C.C., pp.192)

The McKay Commission examined the two grading contracts through the Boston Bar Creek areas: Box Canyon - Great Bear C-2812 by Ledcor, and Great Bear - Summit C-2813 by Edgeworth construction
Respectively, the amount that each contractor was paid was 2.85 and 3.02 times the bid price. (Inq, A54-A55, Schedules B9, B11).

For the Ledcor contract, only some borrow pits were found to be unsuitable. The Edgeworth project's pits contained no gravel or borrow which could be used. Building the foundation for the Snowshed was added to the Ledcor contract, which required foundation fill to be quarried. (Brief, Appendix A)

The Ministry reported cost-overrun causes on almost every contract along the route. These ranged from small, to a million dollars over, to ludicrously over. They provided causes for these changes to the Commission detailing the issues affecting each section. Nearly every section of the highway had at least a single noted cause.

Construction of the Coquihalla, circa 1985
By BC MOTT, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Former D.M. R.G. Harvey provides his view of the situation re: the mistaken borrow pits:

"building [a highway in 1-2 years] especially when subsurface soils investigation is far from complete [is highly risky business at best]" (Harvey, C.C.)

His statement seems contrary to the general investigations done in the late 1970s.

As shown by the design progress percentages listed at End FY 1983/84 to 84/85, it all moved quickly. Quick revisions and additions to drawings resulted in miscalculations being made along the route. (Brief) (Inq).

Heaven Knows 40 years

Retaining wall in the Sowaqua area
Construction of Sowaqua retaining wall 1985
By BC MOTT, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

The earth shifts, and often things get missed when one rushes. It's quite possible (perhaps likely) that the borrow pit locations were examined 'last minute' in 1984. If that were the case, and no-to-little prior information was available for borrow pits, then that is indeed risky business.

Foundation issues also affected bridges. The Ladner Creek bridge had to have its length doubled and The Great Bear snowshed was a box of bad chocolates! (Inq., p.A53, Schedule B7) (Harvey, C.C., p. 193). Two slides popped up at Ladner Creek, one at each end of the bridge. Brief, p. 34)
The hellscape crews had to face was the Ladner Creek area. In-addition to the bridge being doubled, the layers of rock & sediment (substrata) (Havey, C.C, p. 192) presented instability problems. For freshet protection, Ladner Creek was diverted by Emil Anderson under C-0760. Because of plans not being ready, it was added to the Emil Anderson contract instead of being included in one of the adjacent projects.(Brief, p. 35)

There were a number of design changes along with earthen problems faced in the Ladner Creek-Shylock section.. The Sowaqua Creek - Ladner Creek section faced rock work and experienced a costly slide. That required remediation with slope stabilization and drainage. The project went twice over expected costs, according to the MOTH. (Brief, Phase I Grading) The other sections which sat in-proximity to the Coquihalla River downriver had high overrun costs as well.

In slight contrast to the southerly projects, the sections north of Dry Gulch generally faced lower yet still notable overruns. They still had to negotiate rock, with unsuitable materials constantly being encountered.

Dawson's C-2964 Mine Creek - Juliet contract had faced significant additions, which typically would've been carried out by one or a couple of different tendered contracts. The river diversions, the toll booth grading, assisting in the foundations of the Dry Gulch Bridge - they all contributed to expenditures reaching 3.66x the of the bid price. The procedure of adding work like this, as noted - was not normal at all in the B.C. highway building world. It was a product of fast-tracking, plain-and-simple. (Brief, Appendix Phase I grd)

At Larson Hill, Emil Anderson's C-2852 saw too much "stripping" (removing topsoil and vegetation. Large amounts of waste material and dirt combined with rock work and other factors made it the Merritt side's overrun champion.

—--

In January 1985, B.C. Hydro announced that power lines would be installed all the way to the Great Bear Snowshed. 44 km of new 3-phase 25 kV line would be built and 33 km of existing 14.4 kV single-phase line would be upgraded to 25 kV. The electricity would provide lighting along the summit area. (MH, Jan 23, 1985, p. 1A)

"At one point, I told the Premier we wouldn't have the project finished until late 1986,*' Fraser said, " I really have to give credit to all the workers and the engineers who literally worked around the clock to achieve completion of the highway in 20 months. Quite frankly, I didn't think we could do it'."

Alex Fraser, quoted in the Merritt Herald, May 14, 1986

Halfway there. Some fun anyone?

On May 28, 1985, a halfway completion ceremony was held at the Dry Gulch Bridge as part of a press tour along the route.

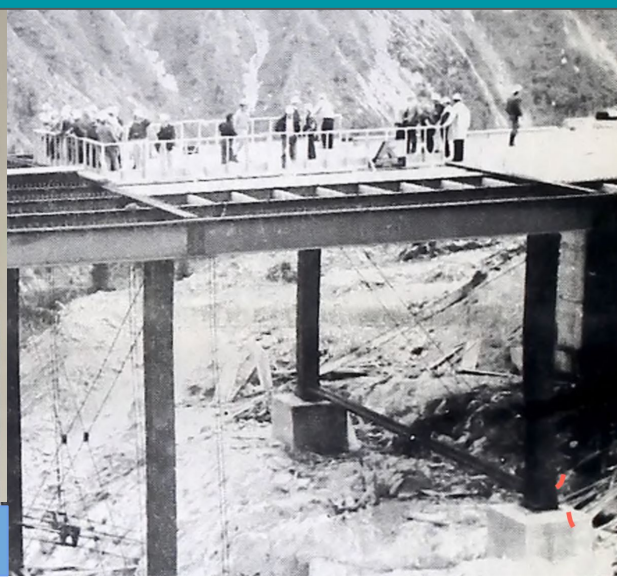
Bennett brought Alex Fraser, Forests Minister & Local MLA TomWaterland; Tourism Minister, and MLA for Kamloops Claude Richmond.
Some civil servants and about 50 members of the press were also in attendance*.

*The Sun said 70 members of the media and civil servants were present

The took participants along the highway project from Abbotsford to Merritt.

Those participating were flown to Abbotsford Airport and then bused along the route, taking the access roads along the corridor until coming to the Dry Gulch Bridge where the ceremony took place.
Bennett and his Ministers (or perhaps just him and Waterland) were attending a luncheon with the Hope CoC at Hope's Country Club
.
Bennett of course, gave a speech. as did Waterland. (HS, May 29, 1985, p. 1) (HS, Jun. 5, 1985, p. 1) They had to get to Dry Gulch, but not before leaving their shoe imprints in concrete at the CNR Station restoration!

A helicopter scooped them up and dropped them off at Dry Gulch. It could not be ascertained how Richmond go there..



Bennett looks at blasting schematics in -preparation for detonation.
Waterland is on the left and Alex Fraser is being given the diagram by Bennett on the right.

Credit: Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald
MH, May 14, 1986,

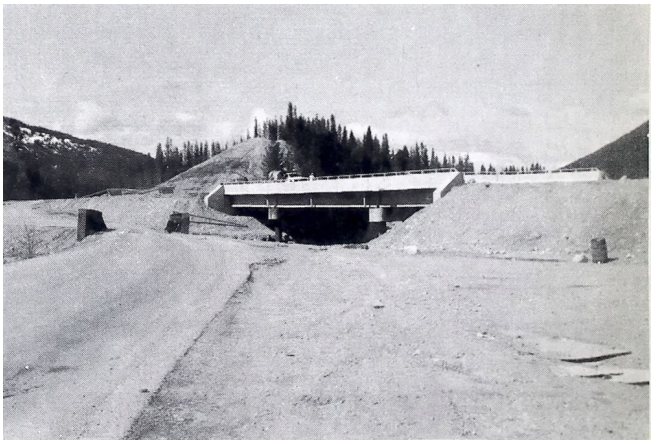
At the Bridge, speeches were made and Bennett got to place a piece of steel for the bridge's arch. At a second location nearby he had the pleasure of detonating an 80 kg charge to destroy a hillside.. It supposedly took three tries, but it went off. (Vsun, May 29, 1985, p. 3)

After the ceremony, the platoon continued towards Merritt where a dinner was held. The attendees then flew out of Merritt Airport.
(MH, May 29, 1985, p. 9A)

Larson Hill Larceny?

Although it could not be found, someone left a comment on a Youtube video (or Facebook) ripping into Larson Hill - or rather the choices the highway designers made in routing the Coq over Larson Hill. It's an interesting ponder. In their haste, did they choose wrong? It's generally a good idea to not have an 8% gradient for 4 km on a freeway when you can. Could it have been built on another alignment?

Nicola I/C, old route 5[A]in background Credit: Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald MH, May 14, 1986,



Henning Bridge Credit: Nicola Valley Museum/ Merritt Herald MH, May 14, 1986,

By August 1985, Boston Bar Creek area contracts were approaching 50%, and the lower Coquihalla ones 75-80% (Harvey, C.C., p. 194). Via a news release in late July, Fraser proclaimed that the highway was 65% complete, (AVT, Aug. 1, 1985, p. 3)(MH, Aug 7, 1985. P. 6C_ with paving reported to have begun on July 5*. (HS, July 31, 1985, p. 1) Grading was expected to be 95% done by August's end. The end of July saw all paving contracts from Great Bear - Merritt awarded. The last of the six paving contracts was awarded September 3, 1985. **(See Table P-1**) Senior designer John Blackey had commented that by early September asphalt had almost entirely been laid between Merritt and Dry Gulch.(MH, Sep. 11, 1985, p. 7A) Back in June, Chisholm had said that the Ministry had decided that paving would not be carried out at temperatures below -5° C because it would give bad results for the pavement. (HS, Jun. 12, 1985, p. 2)

Paving progressed, with Chisholm saying on Oct. 22 it was 75% complete. (Chwk. Prog. p. 3)

Although the winters were better than usual (low amount of snow), curveballs did occur. Terrible cold hit the region in December 1985. December 1984 also had its lows, with Hope Airport hitting -16. °C on December 31, 1984. (HS, Jan. 30, 1985).

Two other reputed contributors to overruns were the later additions median drainage of underground electrical provisions (Brief)

But the temperature record on Nov. 27, 1985 at Hope Airport was killer. -21.4°C. If Wikipedia is correct, that's the coldest Hope Airport was ever read in November. (HS, Dec. 4, 1985, p. 3). Temperatures on the Coquihalla were severer than that. The Ottomite weather Station recorded a -33.5° C "Min" Temperature reading the same day. A second cold snap got the thermometer at Ottomite reading down to -19° C on Feb. 19, 1986.

Down the valley at the Box Canyon Weather Station, a -35° C "min" temp was read on Nov. 27.

*The Commission lists first paving contracts as being given July 7 (a Sunday). Hmm.

(B.C. Station Data - PCS applet, https://services.pacificclimate.org/met-data-portal-pcds/app/preview/2706)
(Ibid, https://services.pacificclimate.org/met-data-portal-pcds/app/preview/2704)

The weather in October 1985 hadn't been ideal as ideal could be. It was wet wet wet! At the Hope Airport, 480.2 mm of rain fell, shattering the old October record set in 1967 of 342.9 mm in 1967. It 'was a "dramatic reversal of the weather earlier in the year" according to the Hope Standard. (HS, Nov. 6, 1985, p. 1) That weather being hot and dry.

November 1985 saw further extreme progress with base paving having been mostly carried out. The warm Autumn in 1985 and the ability for the southern side to be worked on during winters was probably the reason the Coq was even able to be opened in May 1986. Harvey reported that only 3 metres of snow were measured that winter in the area in the winter 84-85. The thickness of the snowfall at Ottomite Weather Station was 1280 mm (B.C. Station Data - PCS applet, https://services.pacificclimate.org/met-data-portal-pcds/app/preview/2529) (Harvey, C.C. p. 192-194).

Come early December, paving had (supposedly) stopped because of winter.. (HS, Dec. 4, 1985, p. 1) (HS, Jan. 15, 1986, p. 10) They had seven kilometres left to apply the base layer to. (Ibid, p. 1).

Dennis Chisholm reported just seven feet having fallen by mid-early January. (HS, Jan. 15, 1986, p.10) Closer of the start of the month he touted that I by early January 1986 construction was 90% complete overall, and the Great Bear Snowshed 85% was complete.(HS, Jan. 15, 1986, p. 10) (HS, Jan. 8, 1986, p. 3) Workers forged on at the Toll Booth and on two major bridges closest to Hope.

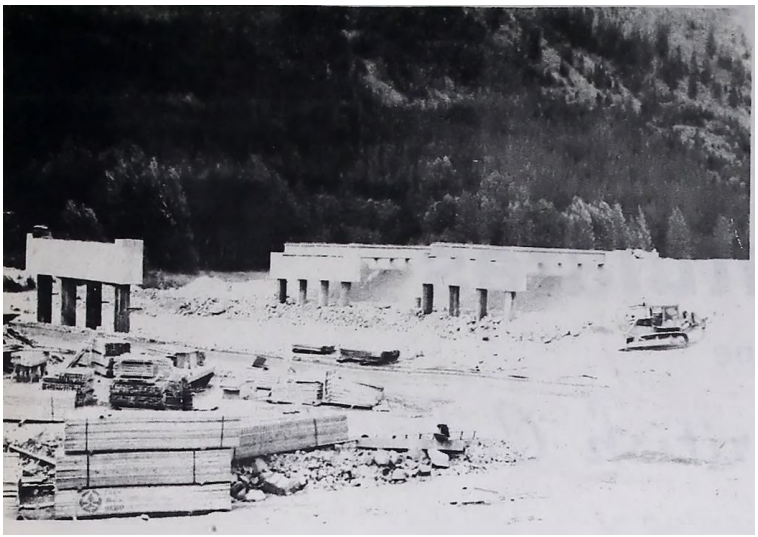
Chisholm reported that route was 90% complete overall by early January 1986, and the Great Bear Snowshed 85% complete.(HS, Jan. 15, 1986, p. 10) (HS, Jan. 8, 1986, p. 3) Workers forged on at the Toll Booth and on two major bridges closest to Hope.

Under proj. O-3411, Ph.1 film production cost $402,778 (Brief, Appx. B)

Rte 5A I/C? MH, April 10, 1985, p. 5C

Shylock Rd Overpass

Hanging opening day signs Coquihall
By BC MOTT, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0



Brodie Bridge

Credit: Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald
MH, May 14, 1986,

Stockpiling was necessary to beat the deadline. The deadline *had to be met*.. Culverts, multiplates and other materials needed to be ordered to facilitate expedient completion. 175 km+ of concrete road barriers had to be ordered from every producer who made them for neigh on two years. They were then delivered to both Hope and Merritt. The Ministry reported that the demand had actually increased the price of concrete guardrail in the Province. (Brief, p. 26) The effort was so large it was technically considered a project (Proj. C-2889)

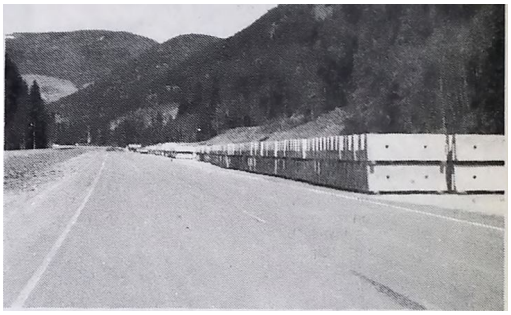
Credit: Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald MH, May 14, 1986,

Preliminary Tote Road

The pipeline access roads were not suitable for the heavy industrial traffic that construction would bring/ The Ministry improved these roads for $723,000/ They had to install or strengthen 20 bridges for the improved access. The Province had to improve these roads before serious work could begin.

The MOTH reported that this work began in April 1984.

(Ann. Rpt. 1984/85) p. 161; lists 18.0 km or road)



Barrier Stockpiling
Credit: Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald MH, May 14, 1986,

At Dry Gulch, a road around the gorge existed. (Harvey, C.C. p. 189). There was also the KVR ROW through the canyon, but because it was so much lower, access to the work areas from it was impossible.

Aerial photography also shows pipeline ROW roads further 'inland'. It looks like traffic could go from Falls Lake to Coldwater Pit, north of Britton Creek. (Aerial Imagery, 1984)

The bypass road was steep & narrow and was not really suitable for consistent transport of large quantities of materials. It was still used continuously during the project. The completion of Dry Gulch Bridge around early Q3 1985 heralded simple reliable continuous access for the Hope and Merritt sides of the project.

The bypass road swung off the pipeline road coming from Falls Lake, and then made its way across the head of Dry Gulch to the Merritt side and reached the highway somewhere before the toll booth (Google Maps Imagery)

Ministry Maintenance Crews were charged with keeping access roads safe in winter. Two private companies, A&M Trucking and H.E. Sanders were tasked with maintaining the road around the head of Dry Gulch. (MH, May, 14, 1986, p. 21D)

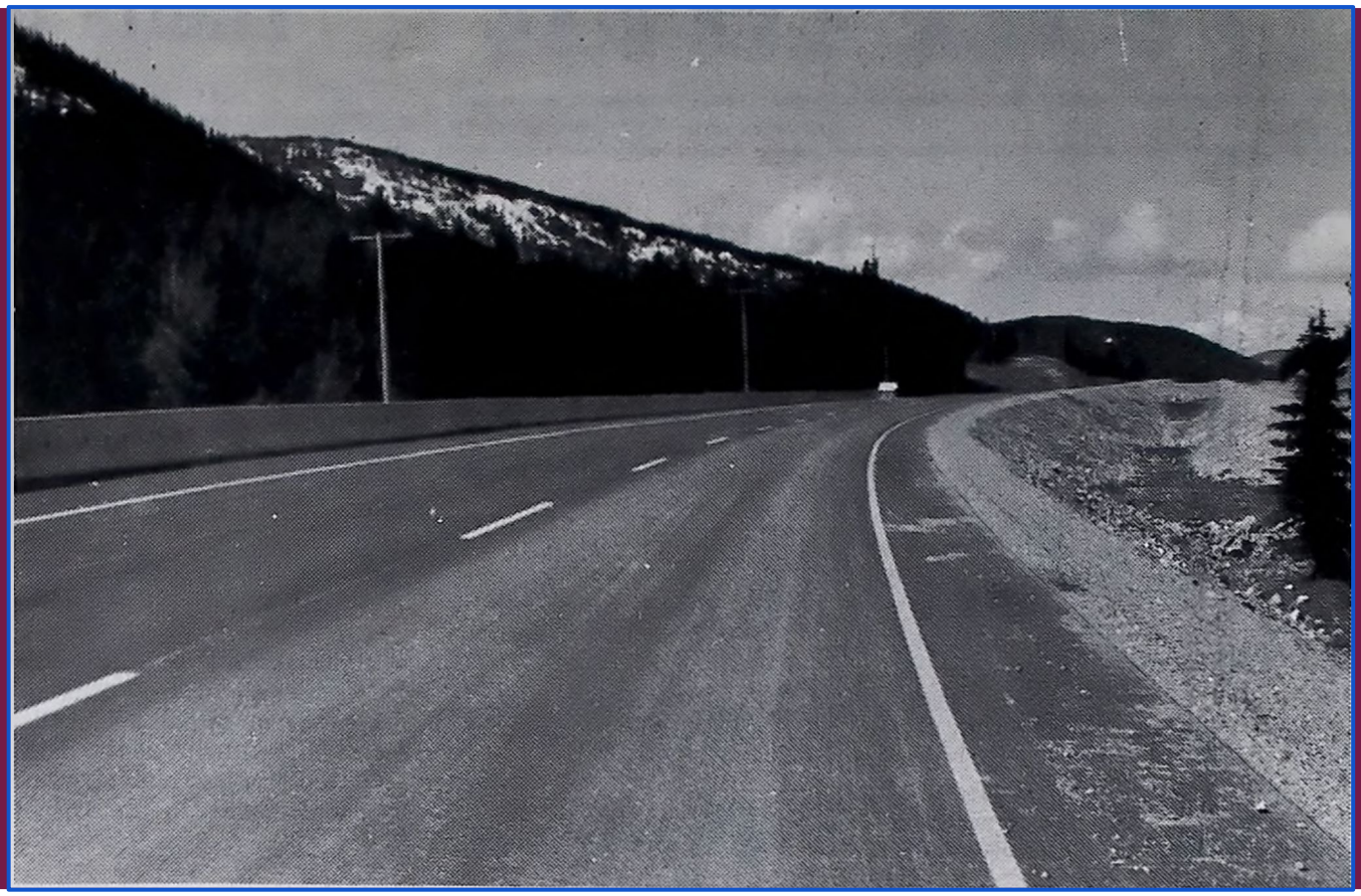
By March, '86 Tom Waterland had been allowed to drive the highway. (Ashcroft Journal, Mar. 25, 1986, p. 4) At March 31, 1986, the Ministry put completion at 98%. They reckoned an estimated 4700 people worked on the highway directly. (Ann.. Rpt. 1985/86. p. 255)

The highway was being accessed by the public in an unfinished state by March
This was not official, just messing about. Eventually around mid-March, the public were banned from using it. Traffic and vandals had made the Ministry pull the trigger. At this time, bridge chicane detours were in-effect, barriers were not in-place and signage was not completed.
(HS, Mar. 19, 1986, p. 1)

DID you know there are three trumpet interchanges found in the Coquihalla system? There is one for each phase.

OPENING PHASE I

May 16, 1986



Credit: Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald
MH, May 14, 1986, 1A

Strain

The influx of people into Hope and Merritt was going to overwhelm services if not prepared for.

Tom Waterland requested the Merritt CoC help put on a good show, they would be welcoming not just thousands, but a whole new reality to the city. Before this, Merritt was a blip on the map, off the main road. With the Coquihalla, it effectively became a different town. Buses came to stop by, trucks came to marshall and fuel.

Both Hope and Merritt CoC's set out to work on planning and executing their parts of the opening ceremonies. (HS, Apr. 30, 1986, p. 1)

Days Away

On March 27, 1986, Bill Bennett announced that Coquihalla Phase I would open on May 16, 1986. He'd called the press to his office for a little spotlight. *(Unfortunately, few outlets spoke of it in-depth)*

(Prov. Mar. 30, 1986, p. 23)
(Vsun, Mar. 30, 1986, H12)
(P.G. Citizen, March 29, 1986, p. 2)

There would be a pancake breakfast, a plaque dedication, and then a fun drive.
Fireworks, events, entertainment a barbecue

500 dignitaries and 15,000 workers received invitations
Chwk Prog, Apr. 2, 1986, p. 1)(HS, Apr. 2, 1986, pp. 1, 2, 4)

Toll Rates were announced on April 14. (Vsun, Apr. 14, 1986, A3)

"I know there's been a lot of speculation and anticipation of the date that I want to mention to you - and that is Friday the 16th of May - We'll be opening the Coquihalla Highway.
-Bill Bennett, quoted by Prince George Citizen

HOPE MAY 16

Ceremonies were held at the roughly 7 acre (28,500 m*2) Memorial Park in Downtown Hope, Traffic control for the events were scheduled from 6: 00 am - 9:30 pm

The place was littered with celebratory banners.

The pancake breakfast was first, and then the ceremonies at 8:20 am.
Both Bennett & Fraser donned aprons.

At 9:00 am, the Cavalcade was scheduled to leave town.

Bill Bennett, Alex Fraser,
Tom Waterland,
Kamloops MLA/Tourism Minister Claude Richmond
and Housing Minister Jack Kempf
came to Hope

Their agenda for the day was 12-pages long, according to the Vancouver Sun (May 17, 1986, A6)

A large pancake breakfast was had before the ceremonies began.. Tom Waterland presided as master of ceremonies for the events.

Speeches were made: with Bennett, Fraser, Hope Mayor Bud Gardner and Claude Richmond delivering theirs.
(Logan Lake Leader, May 27, 1986, p. 1)

92-year-old Hope oldtimer Tony DeAngelis was given the opportunity to speak too.

After 30 minutes of speaking, it was time to continue.

Cabinet then proceeded to unveil the plaque, and unveil the iconic wooden "Coquihalla" sign (see page 2)

Bill Bennett and the Start of the Coquihalla Opening Day Caravan by BC MOTT Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Credit: Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Her MH, May 21, 1986, 1A

9:00 am

From here, the cavalcade was formed. Composed of ~ 30 coaches, truck[s] and cars, it would proceed along the freshly made highway. Greyhound Canada had donated 27 coaches to be used for the opening trip. Bennett would be chauffeured over the brand-new tarmac.

To start the Cavalcade and make an opening statement

Bennett rode with his wife Audrey and another man* in a '61 Buick Invicta with the top down. He brought along his wife Audrey He broke through the vinyl barrier at the north abutment of the Nicolum Creek Bridge. He and his cavalcade climbed up the Boston Bar area where the snows of winter still sat.

On source said that the banner stunt was taken from Shell Oil ads. Is this true?

***Harvey c.c. says it was Tom Johnson, Deputy Minister, However Bud Gardner has claimed it was him just recently**

FALLS LAKE

The cavalcade then stopped at the Falls Creek exit for speeches and to bury a time capsule, which included:

-A list of the workers who built the Coq (c. 6000 names)
-The Voters list for Hope
-First Toll Ticket
-Film (likely 20 Months Thru the Mountains and other clips)
-Lapel pins
-B.C. Magazine issue[s]
-Photos of Hope and Merritt
-Merritt census data (list)
-Merritt Economic Development
-Message from Bob Baird
-Bennett's own message to construction workers

Construction worker Paul Krasniuk, who had worked on the Hope-Princeton 37-years prior & the Coquihalla also got the chance to speak, as did Mike McDowell, Pres. of the B,C, Road Builders Assoc., Kempf, and Kamloops Mayor Jim Walsh

Once the cavalcade continued, it traversed the Coldwater section. A MOTH truck then broke through a second banner coming into Merritt.

"Through the contents of this capsule and through this cairn that we dedicate today, we salute your skills and abilities and pay honour and tribute to the memories of the four British Columbians who gave their lives during the construction. " We bequeath this highway to you who follow and we hope that as our inheritors, you carry forward our proud legacy of achievement and continue to develop our province for the enduring benefit of all of the people of British Columbia." *- Bill Bennett, quoted at Falls Lake*

Credit: Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald MH, May 21 1986
AT Falls Lake Unveiling the plaque for the time capsule (Bennett 2nd right)

At some point, Bennett paid tribute to the four men who died during the construction of the highway (this 'zine is dedicated to them). Maintenance trucks and avalauncher gun trucks were lined up like a military presentation, possibly at the towns or along the highway (locations unascertained)

Credit: Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald MH, May 21 1986

"As we stand here amongst the unrivaled scenery that typifies the Coquihalla, we can only guess at the satisfaction that must be in the minds of the members of the B.C. Road Builders Association."
-Fraser, quoted at Falls Lake

heaven knows 40 years

MERRITT

Drive 'n Drive @ 1:00 pm

With the second banner broken by a MOTH truck, the cavalcade arrived at the Coldwater Interchange Rest Stop. At 12:30 pm (*the scheduled time anyhow)*
They were welcomed by Miss Merritt Rachel Robichaud and Merritt Princess Kulvit Ahuja to the city. A number of dignitaries were given the chance to speak on stage.

*This possibly occurred where the tourism centre was located near the I/C

Merritt Mayor Bob Baird spoke. He paid tribute to Hugh McGowan, the original caravan organizer who had passed before the 1973 announcement had even been made.
(Death Registration
1972-09-004143)

Kamloops mayor Jim Walsh also spoke at Merritt.

Fraser spoke once more, then community leader Sherwin Kelly did. His long-held dream had come true that day.

Bennett gave further commentary on the economic benefit and prosperity the Coquihalla would bring.
Jack Kempf would be hit in the head by a loudspeaker that blew over.Graced with a slight concussion, he went to the hospital for a few hours and received seven stitches.
(Vsun, May 17, 1986, A6)
(T.Col, May 17, 1986, p. 1)

Another commemorative plaque was unveiled at Merritt by Bennett, Fraser, Baird Waterland, and Kelly.

Absent Kelly, they proceeded downtown, where they opened a two-day celebratory street mall on Quilchena Avenue Merritt, scheduled for 1:15 pm

Claude Richmond displayed a Coquihalla baseball cap. A photo caption in the Merritt Herald screams "I'M A COQUIHALLIC"

They then went to attend a luncheon which was held at the rodeo grounds.. There, Bennett. Baird and Waterland opened the very special rodeo, scheduled for 2:00 pm

Afterwards, Bennett and Cabinet traveled to Kamloops. They unveiled signs, symbolically starting Phase II, which was already under construction.
(Chwk Prog., May 21, 1986, p. 3)

In the lead up to the public opening at 1:00 pm, police and the Ministry would have to manage traffic.

At Hope, the intention was to let traffic queue on the Floods-Hope Bypass from Floods to Exit 173. Traffic would be released with police pacing the front.

Bob & Lois Kitsul were reported asto being the first members of the public to get to use the highway on the Hope side. They parked at 6:30 am and hung around 6 ½ hours before the highway opened. Less than a dozen cars were waiting by 10:30 am. That line would quickly build according to the Hope Standard to a 3 km line 2 ½ hours later. Expectations were that traffic would queue for miles.

At c. 1:00 pm the highway was opened to traffic at both Hope and Merritt.

The tolls were to come into effect at 00:00 May 17, so many were excited to drive it without paying.

According to an article written by Carol Hierck of Merritt, she and many others were able to use the Coquihalla to travel to Hope. They left at 5:30 am and got to Hope just after 7:00 am. Notable folks onboard were Henry and Clara Norgaard, who had fought extensively for the highway - and Sherwin Kelly (of course).

Watch this video posted on Facebook by Emcon Services showing the opening! It's very good

Coquihalla Opening Day Crowd Shot
by BC MOTT Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

At Merritt Ceremonies

Falls Lake Ceremony

Opening Day Crowd by BC MOTT
Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2

TRUCK THRU THE BANNER
COLDWATER I/C

Credit: Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald
MH, May 21 1986

A Great Point of View Banner

A Great Point of View Banner
A Great Point of View
by BC MOTT Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Parklife

Assumedly before being assaulted by the wind, Jack Kempf announced that the Coquihalla area would get two recreation areas and a provincial park.

The three recreation/park areas along the Coquihalla had been officially created on the 14th. (OIC, 986/86). The parks were previously planned., the recreational value of the area was realized even in the 1970s such as by the 1978 preliminary report. Their creation had previous announced the October prior by then Parks Minister Tony Brummet (HS, Oct. 16, 1985, p. 1)(MH, Oct. 9, 1985, p. 1)

Master plans for each area were released in 1987 (Canyon); 1988 (River); 1990; Summit. (BC. Legislative Library Listings)
The Province designated:
Coquihalla Canyon as a recreation area at 130 ha.
Coquihalla river Recreation Area at 100 ha
Coldwater River Provincial Park at 76 ha

This meant the Othello Tunnels would be refurbished, protected and turned into the world's least tourist trappy tourist trap that isn't a tourist trap.

Officials attending Phase I Hope - Merritt, Coquihalla Highway

(As could be ascertained)

Premier Bill Bennett
Bob Baird, Mayor of Merritt
Keith "Bud" Gardner. Mayor of Hope
Alex Fraser, MLA for Cariboo, Minister of Transportation and Highways
Betty Hinton, Mayor of Logan Lake (present at Hope too)
Claude Richmond, MLA for Kamloops, Tourism Minister
Mike McDowell, B.C. Road Builders Association
Jim Walsh, Mayor of Kamloops
Tom Waterland local MLA, Cabinet Minister
Fred King, MP for Okanagan-Similkameen
Jack Kempf, Minister of Housing, Lands and Parks (WIA)
Future Logan Lake Mayor Ove Christensen

Banner Snatchers

At Hope, wind and thieves had lifted the many banners that were hung up for the opening. Mayor Bud Gardner wasn't bothered since the town didn't have to take them down. (HS, May 21, 1986, p. 3) Nor would they have had to disposed of. These banners would also become souvenirs.

MLAs need not pay

Just before the highway opened, MLAs were given exemption passes. They would not have to pay the toll. (T.Col. May 15, 1986, p. 1)

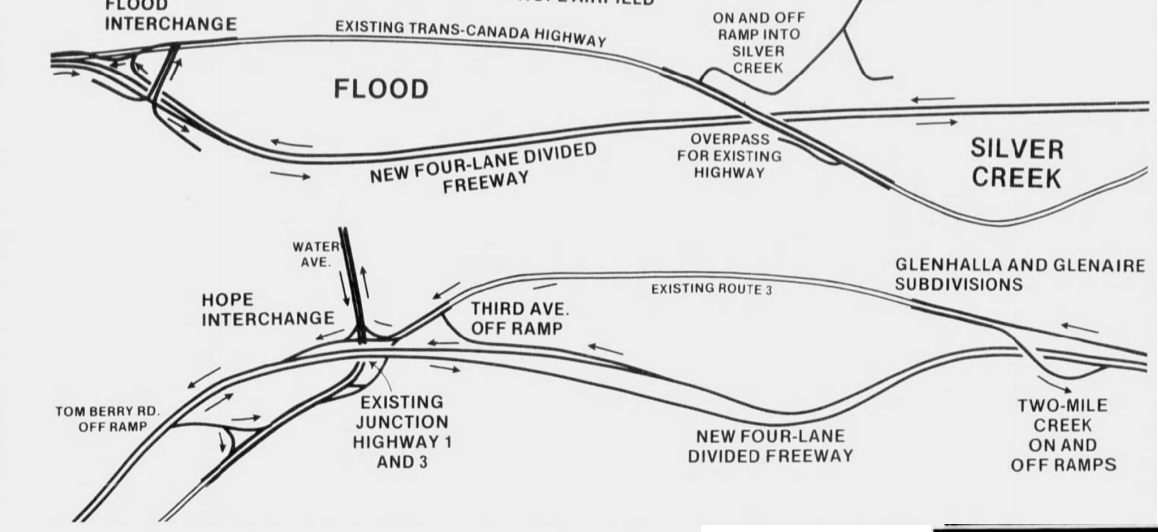
(Salmon Arm Observer, May 21, 1986, p. 13)
Merritt Herald and Hope Standard Issues of May 14, 1986 & May 21, 1986

Credit: Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald
MH, May 21 1986 AT Falls Lake Unveiling the plaque for the time capsule

Tragedy at a High Level

Dennis Chisholm's son Randy Warren was tragically killed after an avalanche fell and trapped him on Feb. 17, 1986 in the proximity of Dry gulch. He and his friend Michael Darin were snowshoeing and were caught under a slab avalanche. Darin uncovered himself and escaped uninjured - but Randy was not located for an hour. RCMP and the MOTH avalanche after and passed away at 23 years old.
(HS, Feb. 19, 1986, p. 1)(MH, Feb. 16, 1986, p. 1)

Not only was the Coquihalla pushed nearly beyond the limits of machine and man, but it was also marred with personal tragedy for the man who managed things on the ground. That makes it more incredible than it already is.



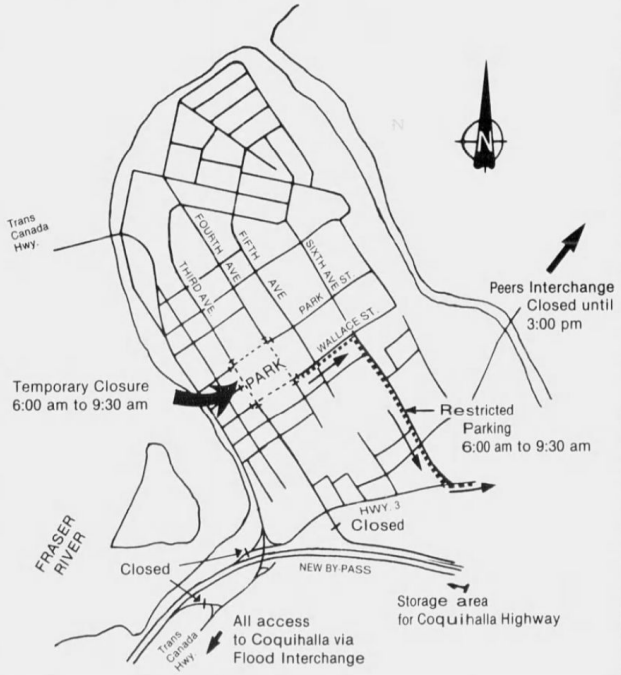
Ministry Maps
L

Top Flood-Hope Bypass
HS, Jun. 6, 1984, p. 2

Coquihalla Highway Opening Ceremonies Temporary Road Closures, Hope May 16, 1986

On **Friday, May 16, 1986,** the opening ceremonies for the Coquihalla Highway will take place at Memorial Park. From **6:00 am** to **9:30 am** that day, roads adjacent to the Park, (Third Ave, Fourth Ave, Park St, and Wallace St), will be closed to traffic, and restricted parking will be in effect as shown on the map below. Peers Interchange will be closed from **6:00 am** to **3:00 pm.**

The Coquihalla Highway will open at **1:00 pm.** Motorists wishing to drive the new highway on opening day should line-up on the new by-pass via Flood Interchange. Note that on opening day the highway can only be accessed via Flood Interchange.



Province of British Columbia
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION AND HIGHWAYS
Hon. Alex V. Fraser, Minister

GREYHOUND
Greyhound Lines of Canada is pleased to announce the following schedule changes effective April 27, 1986:
WEST TO VANCOUVER
7:00 a.m. - Via Fraser Canyon
2:15 p.m. - Via Coquihalla Pass — NON-SMOKING
7:25 p.m. - Via Penticton
12:30 a.m. - Via Coquihalla Pass
4:25 a.m. - Via Penticton — NON-SMOKING
- Coquihalla Pass — NON-SMOKING
EAST TO CALGARY
8:05 a.m.
10:35 a.m.
4:30 p.m.
9:55 p.m. - NON-SMOKING
AUTHORIZED AGENT
VANCOUVER BRITISH COLUMBIA CANADA
MAY 2 - OCTOBER 13
THE 1986 WORLD EXPOSITION
For further information please contact the
GREYHOUND AGENT
836-3233
Greyhound Canada
We drive, you save — with us, the bus.

(Top) the original plans for the Floods-Hope Bypass, you can read about the Silverhope debacle in this 'zine

(L) Notice of opening ceremony restrictions. The design style for notices like these were common in the early-mid 1980s under Alex Fraser (HS, Jun. 6, 1984, p. 2)

New Greyhound schedules at Sicamous. They set up shop in Merritt adjacent to the Grasslands Hotel on Voght.
(Eagle Valley News, May 21, 1986, p. 9) (MH, April 16, 1986,p. 1A)

Figures Given in Press and Various Publications (before- and during construction)

Asphalt: 900,000 tonnes (d)(f)(g); OR aggregate: 700,000 tonnes, proper asphalt: 38,000 tonnes (a)
Bridges 38 (d)
Concrete : 125,000 tonnes (b)(e)(f)
Crash barriers: 160 km (a)(e)
Median barrier: 71,000 m (g)
Non-median crash barrier: 90,000 (g)
Length of Bridge Railings: 160,000 m (b) (seems to be error)
Excavation:
Materials Excavated (excluding rock): 22.7 million cubic metres(a)
Rock Excavated: 4.85 million cubic metres (a)
Total Excavation: 27.5 million cubic metres (h)
Gravel: 3.7 million tonnes (d) 3.73 million tonnes (f) 3,735,000 tonnes (g)
No. of Interchanges: 18(a)(c) 13(a)*

Median barrier: 71,000 m (g)
Number of contracts: 118
Overpasses: 38
Pipeline crossings: 50(a) or c.50(e)
River diversions: 18 (e)(f)(i)
Steel: 20,000 tonnes (e)(f) (most likely) or 20,000 tonnes only for bridges and underpasses (b)
Underpasses: 19 (c)(d)
Protect Devices (Avalanche?)" 28 (HS, Sep. 26, 1984, p. 2)

**There are 15 interchanges from Highway 3 I/C to Nicola I/C including the aforesaid pair. The Comstock I/C was not built until 1988. That brings us to 14. Mine Creek and Shylock are turnarounds, however they must be counted. Therefore, this extra could only be the Othello I/C or Zopkios. Nicolum Creek was redefined to the the southern end of the Coquihalla, and Zopkios could've been excluded because it is more a brake check than an interchange.*
Today however, it has an exit number so it is considered an interchange.
Alternatively, the difference of five interchanges can be explained as the moving of what was considered the proper to Nicole The ministry has six different exit numbers assigned from Floods-Nicolum, but functionally only five interchanges. It can be hard to tell what is an interchange when ramps are spread apart.
Zopkios or Othello/Hwy 3. Take your pick!

A. Coquihalla story
B. Province, May 16, 1986, p. 10
C.HS, May 14, 1986, p. 4
D. HS, May 14, 1986, p. 6
E. 20-Months Thru the Mountains
F. Oliver Chronicle, June 5, 1986, pp. 14-15
G. Surrey Leader, June 9, 1985, A38.
H. Harvey, Coast Connection, pp. 195, 198.
(I) this may include a diversion in Ladner Creek given the Commission Brief gives 17 major diversions (Brief, pp. 20, 28)

Heaven knows coq 40 years

Post-construction figures from Ministry Brief to McKay Commission (Retroactive)

— 1,650 hectares of clearing and grubbing
— 17 major river diversions, all meeting strict environmental standards (possibly excluding the Ladner Creek diversion
— 7,500,000 cubic metres of rock excavation and placement
— 25,000,000 cubic metres of other earth materials (if all the trucks required to move this material were lined up, they would stretch across Canada, six abreast, from the Pacific to the Atlantic)
— 8,000,000 tonnes of gravel crushed and placed
— 46 bridges, some of them major engineering accomplishments
— 175 kilometres of concrete median barrier and guard rail, precast and installed
— 44 structural steel multi plate structures (large culverts) with spans up to 11.3 metres
— 45 kilometres of smaller culverts
— 11 cattle underpasses
— 160 kilometres of fencing through ranch country
— 3 major concrete arches (“armadillo”)
— 645,000 tonnes of pavement
— 510 precast concrete beams
— 163,000 tonnes of concrete
— 25 retaining walls
— 50 relocations of the Trans Mountain oil pipeline and the Westcoast Transmission gas lines
— installation of hydro and gas lines

(Credit:MH, May 16, 1986 Merritt Herald/ Nicola Valley Museum

Coquihalla Phase 1 Hope - Merritt Senior Personnel

as identified by Heaven Knows Z&J

Regional Construction Manager directly in-charge:

Dennis Chisholm
with Hans O. Zimmerman assisting

Senior Avalanche Coordinator: Jack Bennetto, possibly another person

Avalanche design: Geoff Freer, J. Johnson, other staff

Deputy Ministers Over Project's Lifetime
Henry "Tom" Thomas Miard (early surveys and announcement)

Howard Fleming Sturrock (major contributions n/k, avalanche monitoring continued

Robert "Bob" Gourlay Harvey
(1977 throne speech, design, plotting, studies, construction, environmental, slowdown)
Alan "Al" Edwards Rhodes (acting) Fast track, major construction begins
Thomas "Tom" R. Johnson construction, completion

Alex Fraser, B.C. Minister of Transportation and Highways

Planning, initial reconnaissance, surveying and locating the highways
Design and Surveys Director: Edward Emerson Readshaw, with Senior Design Supervisor John H. Blackey, predecessors

Ministry Construction Chief, Director Norman Robert Zapf, assistance from R.L Chapman

Merritt Highways
District Manager
David S. Dunliffe

Chilliwack Highways
District Manager
Patrick 'Pat' Sheridan Dunn

Grading Supervisors, senior and acting
By segment from Hope
a. H.E. Wilde
b. R.E. Matthews
c. A. Wlasuk
d. R.G. Walsh
e. R.J. Chadwick
f. A.T. Nesting
g. I.C. Williams
h. B.F. MacKay
I. D.A. Kirkland
j. B.J Penner
K. D.B. Hyde
L. M. Makayev
M. C.J. Lessard
N. M.R. Newton
O.A.G Gerow
P. R.A. Hewko
Q. A.R. Atkins
R. G.W. Hanna
S. J.E. Wells
T. J.M. Sheremeta
U. R.A. Galloway
V. J. Dunbar

Director of Bridge Engineering L. 'Len' C. Johnson, assisted by Ron.W. Lyall, Bridge Construction Engineer

Senior Project Supervisors
H.W. Sandwith,
R.D. Vanlerberg,
A.A. Talbot,
R.G. Matthews

Paving Supervisors
Director, O.R. Tisbot
(See Coquihalla Story for list of paving personnel not mentioned herein)
A R.C. White
B W.J. Pijl
C R.A. King
D R.A. Pastor
E G.A. Tronrud
F. D.W. Lenz
G J. Capuszta
H M.A. Fredricksen

Length a) Length of Phase I: 115.5 km(b) c. 120(a) 113 km (Google Maps measurement Nicola Overpass-Othello Overpass

23 Grading Contracts from 1978-1985
17 bridge contracts
6 paving contracts
12 gravel/aggregate supply contracts
Other smaller contracts for electrical, avalanche control, signage, publicity, communications, two maintenance yards etc. (INQ, p. 23)

Number of Consultants is inconsistently given
According to the Final Report from the Commissioner, p.23:

27 engineering companies worked on design for infrastructure
12 consultants for geotechnical and fountain
19 environmental consultants

According to the Ministry Brief to the Commission (p.26), 36 engineering and consulting firms relating to highway, bridge, geotechnical and environmental design.

According to Harvey, Coast Connection, ch. 8, there were 66 in total, conflicting with the commissioner

Road Design Consultants ***From the "Coquihalla Story"***

*Hope - Othello Graeme & Murray Consultants** (MOTH also credited)*
*Othello - Portia Fenco Lavalin** (MOTH also credited)*
*Portia-Dry Gulch T.M. Tomson & Associates** & Underwood McClellan Ltd.(MOTH also credited)*
Dry Gulch-Brookmere Zoltan Kuun Associates (MOTH also credited)
Design stopped at Kingsvale in 1982 (Harvey, C.C.) *Brookmere-Glenwaller* *McElhanney Group* *Stanley Associated Engineering*
Glenwalker-Merritt *Associated Engineering* *N.D. Lea (perhaps only the Merritt Bypass)*

From the "Coquihalla Story"

Listed Bridge Consultants (possibly others not included here in- actually

1 CWMM for Great Bear Snowshed
2 Fenco Lavalin**
3 Ker Priestman & Associates
4 Graeme & Murray Consultants**
5 T.M. Tomson & Associates**
6 Crippen Consultants
7UMA Engineering
8 Buckland and Taylor
9 Reid Crowther & Associates
10 CBA Engineering
11Spar Consultants
12Berry Engineering
13 Swan Wooster Engineering
14 Acres International
15 ND Lea **
16 Robertson Kolbeins, Teerna & Gallagher

**indicates participated in both bridge, grading, const design etc.

Coquihalla: *The Avalanches*

They don't cackle, they thunder. The Coquihalla passes through some scary mountainsides.

Back around 1973, the Department of Highways set up three unmanned weather stations for measuring temperature, precipitation, wind, etc. A few more mountaintop stations that were less comprehensive in their data were set up as well. They provided temperatures on the mountain-tops which was pertinent for predicting avalanches. Given the high snowfall, these stations had transmitting towers up to 10 metres high.
(Harvey, CC, p. 176)

The years from starting observations until the throne speech had meant good data could be collected, allowing the Ministry to make a game plan. By 1980 they had developed an Avalanche Atlas of the area.

THE Avalanche game plan

The Coquihalla area has 108 identified paths, 67 of those impact the highway. (Harvey IRF Paper, 1981) To combat the threat, planners began finding solutions (some complex and some simple) to mitigate or eliminate the risk. The highway's level and trajectory had to be designed based on both the depth of snow accumulation (it needed to be higher than the snowpack in winter) and the effects of avalanches. If it was in an avalanche path, move it away from it, shift it or build earthworks. Plans called for the construction of dams, berms and mounds, containment basins and trenches to interrupt flow in the run-out zone (where the terrain flattens out). Harvey alludes to the size of some structures used in his book "Head On!": *"an avalanche diversion trench…180 metres wide and 200 metres long and 5 to 10 metres deep, and beside it a rockfill berm 150 metres long and 30 metres high."* (Harvey, Head On! P. 174)

For internal purposes, the avalanche work had the project no. C-2917.

The opening souvenir booklet *the Coquihalla Story* gives the number of each protection structure: 8 avalanche dams, 19 containment basins, two diversion trenches and three sets of "retarding" (i.e. avalanche slowing) mounds. It affirms the worst avalanche area is the Box Canyon-Summit section. It's said to have 11 *very bad* paths. The avalanche team set up six weather stations, three up the mountains and three in the valley. Eight 105 mm recoilless rifles were planned to be used and a mobile unit with an avalauncher was also part of the tool kit. (MH, May 14, 1986, p. 23D)

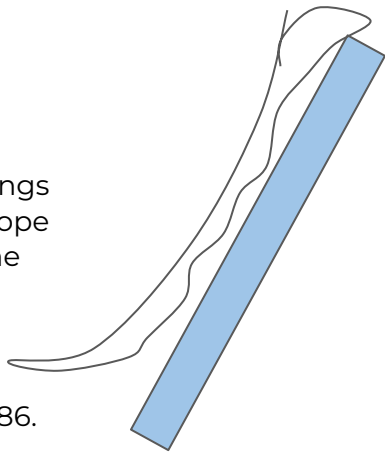
During construction three full-time occupancy work camps were located in areas with avalanche threat. Mitigation of that risk was foremost accomplished by forecasting. It's unclear if evacuation protocol was created for evacuations, but when forecasting indicated danger, work did stop. When avalanche control was required an avalauncher (explained further later) or explosives from helicopters did the trick. "Ski cutting" (someone skis down the mountain and triggers the avalanches) were also used at times.

Mobile Avalauncher (MH, May 14, 1986. P. 18D)
Credit: Merritt Herald/NIcola Valley Museum

At the Great Bear Snowshed, the avalanche risk was extreme. In one of the Coquihalla's biggest screw-ups, the roof had not been completed before the onset of winter. Geotechnical errors and insecurities in preparation of the site were a factor in said botching.

Every site worker took a brief avalanche training session and had an avalanche beacon whilst on site and enumeration of workers along with the type of work planned kept things safe. Control of avalanches at that time involved ski cutting (where a skier descends a slope in-order to trigger a small avalanche), hand dropped explosive charges and a "clothesline bomb tram".

During construction, Jack Bennetto was head of the 11 member Coquihalla avalanche team. Provincial program head Geoff Freer left his post in 1989, and Bennetto took it, leaving the Coquihalla team. Avalanche work was rated as 85% complete at March 31, 1986.



Bombs Away

In an innovative stroke, the Ministry decided to build two permanent bomb trams on the Coq, These are called avalanche control ropeways. .Two were built, one at Great Bear and one at the Cassio-Miranda Avalanche Group (see map p. 14) Respectively, they were 4.3 km and 6.0 km in length. Today they appear on the side of the highway as strange ski-lift frame like structures.

The Ministry considered using conventional artillery as in Rogers Pass. Finding the guns, the people to run the guns and the shells for a destructive weapon of war inclined querying other options.

According to a Ministry employee's conference submission, J.R. Stevens, a ministry "representative" visited Europe in Spring 1985 to evaluate ropeways. Obviously, the results were positive because they were built. Fall and winter saw a location selected and final survey was undertaken in March & April 1986. The contract for the construction of the ropeways was let to Murray Latta Machine Co. Ltd. at a $2,222,300 bid price; the contract for the bomb carriers Band Electronics, latterly known as SSK Digital Communication Systems Inc. (HS, June 25, 1986, p. 2.) Interestingly, the Latta contract also specified the operational training of staff and "all manuals, tools and parts".

Construction began in June 1986. Helicopters facilitated the work, which included building helipads and the towers. During the construction, traffic was stopped so that the wires could be stringed. (MH, Oct. 29, 1986, 1B) The ropeways were put into service February 1987, the first on the continent of North America.

Tram expenditures to Aug. 29, 1987: $3,903,560 (Brief, Appx B)
Artillery 'towers' ditto: $1.112.422 uncertain unidentified project totalling $234,950 possibly for the same. (M-4100 and M-4164 respectively)

The rope could move at 6 m/s and could carry up-to 10 charges for each deployment.. These charges could vary in weight, and each had a bell-shaped cover as to not damage the rope in the blast. The blast and the rope needed to be a distance of over 30 metres away from each other. (Harvey CTWP, RtR p. 76.) They didn't have to use all ten spaces in one deployment, allowing for tailored detonations.

The Ministry still decided to purchase guns though. Jack Bennetto was head of the Coquihalla Avalanche Program during construction and for a few years after. He managed to obtain 105 mm recoilless rifles. Eleven* (or so) gun platforms were built along the highway. An image in the *Coquihalla Story* commemorative booklet suggests one (or more) of these turrets were located in a leg-elevated hut off the highway. These have likely been demolished today. Eight of them are still listed in the Ministry's Landmark Kilometre Inventory (LKI). Within the LKI, these eight emplacements are called **avalanche turrets**. (see map p. 14) (LKI, Nichols Consulting, 2025 ed.

*Please see on next page

Avalanche Crews at Duke with an M27 105 mm recoilless rifle. The recoilless rifle's nature means they don't kickback, preventing complications during firing ***(via Jack Bennetto at The Avalanche Journal.) Fair Dealing.***

In early 1993, the MOTH had four 'howitzers' on the Coquihalla program plus four avalanche workers as well. *(note: The reporter may have misidentified the recoilless rifles)*

The Ministry did manage to recruit a team to operate the surplus-bought guns.

The Ministry has also used "avalaunchers" for avalanche control on the Coquihalla. They're pneumatic guns which propel rounds a far shorter distance (maybe 1- 2.5 km) than artillery. They were invented by American Monty Atwater in the early 1960s. They require no gunpowder. In 1981, the Ministry were using Mark 20 & 21 avalaunchers with a range of 1500 metres. (Harvey Paper IRF 1981, p. 31). The discrepancy of range of the avalaunchers is odd. Some sources say they are nitrogen propelled, but perhaps different models have different propellants types.
(MH, May 14, 1986, p. 18D)

In 2008, serious avalanches ('the worst ever") closed the Coq for days.
At that time, Jeff Knight of the MoT relayed that the ropeways were discontinued in 1994. The recoilless rifles had followed in 2000. He even went so far as to call them "outdated". (KTW, Feb 15, 2008, p. 4.)
It appears today the Ministry only uses helicopter bombing. It's unclear if avalaunchers are used today.

*Sources conflict. One says 11, another 12 and a third 13 One would think the man responsible for the Coquihalla Avalanche program would get that number right.
Today the ministry uses helicopters for avalanche control on the Coquihalla. *The Coquihalla Story* shows elevated huts, which do not appear to have survived to the present day.

Bell, Stewart. Vsun, January 9, 1993, B1-B2.

Bennetto, Jack. "Evolution of the Avalanche Management Program for the Coquihalla Highway." ISSW conference papers. 1988, https://arc.lib.montana.edu/snow-science/objects/issw-1988-229-231.pdf

Brennan, John. "Evolution of the Avalancher." ISSW conference papers. 2006https://arc.lib.montana.edu/snow-science/objects/issw-2006-572-575.pdf

Emson, Jane. The Hamilton Spectator, January 9, 1993, C20.

Interview w. Jack Bennetto by Alex Cooper of The Avalanche Journal. 2023.
https://avalanchejournal.ca/caa-history-project-interview-jack-bennetto

McClung, David."Full-Depth Avalanche Occurrences Caused by Snow Gliding, Coquihalla British Columbia, Canada. *Journal of Glaciology,* 45.151 (1999): 539-546 Web.

Interview w/ Geoff Freer by Alex Cooper of The Avalanche Journal, n.d.
https://avalanchejournal.ca/caa-history-project-interview-geoff-freer/

Stevens, J.R. "Avalanche Control Ropeways - Coquihalla Highway Safety Program." ISSW conference papers. 1988.
https://arc.lib.montana.edu/snow-science/objects/issw-1988-011-015.pdf

COQUIHALLA CHANGEABLE MESSAGE SIGNS

The new Coquihalla and surrounding highways saw the addition of Changeable Message Signs. A total of 11 or so signs would be implemented for Phase I ♦.

A $1,215,818 bid price contract was awarded to Ferranti-Packard Electronics under project no. E-3624. The physical overhead signs were to be six metres horizontally, 1.2 metres tall and could show a maximum of thirty-six (36) - 46 cm tall characters. The signs could be changed from the Ministry Deas Radio Communication Tower. Not many 3rd party sources corroborate how they operated, but available sources suggest that maintenance foreman contacted the Deas Centre via Telex or radio. Deas would then change the signs using a telephone system. Known locations of signs to be installed under the contract were:
-At Peers Creek. Hwy 5,
-At Dewdney Creek Hwy 5;
-One at the summit by Coldwater Creek seven km north of the Toll Booth Hwy 5;
-Two in Kamloops, one near the Kamloops weigh scale west of Copperhead Dr, and the other west of Columbia St. on the 1-5-97 segment;
-One 4 km north of Merritt on Hwy 5;
-One each at Spences Bridge and Sicamous each on Hwy 1
- Three signs at the Hunter Creek interchange. It's not totally clear if these were installed under C-3016 or E-3624 but the later is more likely.
The Ministry also installed a road advisory station for travellers. It was to be broadcast at 1490 AM.

In Dec. 1986, Merritt Dist. Mgr. Dave Dunliffe told the Vancouver Sun that the CMS's, the advisory radio & four radio controlled closure gates were still not-operational. He expected them to come online 'any day now'. As of Late Nov. BC Tel hadn't even connected the ones had Laidlaw. They were to remain like that for an "indefinite period of time." (HS, Nov. 26, 1986, p. 8)

For information on the radio system see page 75.

(Vsun, Dec. 16m, 1986, B1-B2)

(CHWK Prog. Jan 22, 1986, p. 1). (HS, Feb. 12, 1986, p. 12

♦The 1985/86 report says 11, The Coquihalla Story (1986) says 18 and includes Agassiz, Haig and Princeton in their list of locations. February 1986 news stories say 14 but count 12 specific locations, possibly repeating the Copperhead Drive location in saying "two in the Kamloops area". Eleven seems most likely to have been installed as two signs are outstanding from that 14 total. Huh? The 11 figure is backed up by a Sun story from Dec. 1986 as "some 11 in all)
(Feb. 12, 1986, p. 12.)
(Surrey Leader, Feb 23, 1986, A8)
(Ann. Rpt. 1984/85, p. 215).

GREAT BEAR SNOWSHED No. 2850

Constructed under B-2882 by Kerkhoff
Construction @ $5,524,672 bid price
-Designer/Engineer: CWMM
-Contact awarded June 21, 1985
-Site slated to be ready
by June 30, 1985
-Work began:
mid-late August 1985 (full site accessible)
-Initial completion date:
November 30, 1985 (failed)
-Completion date: uncertain, Feb 1986?
-Horizontal plane length (total):
280.88 m (portal face - portal face)
-Width maybe 32 m?
-Width (at rockfaces) 38.48 m (anchor abutment to edge of service road
-Alternative given lengths: 285 m
-No. of lights (as opened) 720
-76 bays,
(arranged 2;8;6*6;6 south-north)
-152 screens
-184 Transverse Roof Beams
-Electrical room at north end in centre
-600 m central radius
-160 m spiral length transition at southern end
-Built with partially heated deck, now discontinued
(Record drawings, CDOT, (2020))
(Inq, pp. 30-35) (HS, May 14, 1986. p. 10)

Contract price: $5,524,672
Final payment to contractor $10,501,689
Actual total cost $15,170,193 (Datafile A, Stinson Commission Brief, A27)
(expenditures to Oct. 27, 1987)

-Concrete columns with pre-stressed concrete roof beams, cantilever retaining wall, cast-in-place concrete tieback anchors and beams, 8 cast in place shear walls - (CDOT, 2020) Wingwalls too

NICOLUM CREEK BRIDGE No. 2828

Constructed under B-2789 by Goodbrand
Construction @ $5,190,930 bid price
-Designer/Engineer: Acres International
-Contract awarded January 30, 1985
4 steel girders
2*Single concrete pylon pits
Length 170.00 m
Width Deck 25.23 m with widening to ~27.6 m
Three spans, South-North 53.00 m, 72.00 m, 53.00 m
450 m central radius, with spiral transition for about 60 m before southern end
Deck thickness 22.5 cm
Superelevation 0.06 m/m (except flattened area)

Contract price: $5,190,930
Final payment to contractor $5,297,925.24
Actual total cost $5,773,553 (Datafile A, Stinson Commission Brief, A27)
(expenditures to Oct. 27, 1987)

The bridge deck was evaluated by McElhanney in 2025 with a final report on January 16, 2026. The bridge deck condition is abhorrent, and tenders closed April 20, 2026 for deck resurfacing and expansion joint replacement
(Unofficial Tender Documents- Nicolum Creek Bridge 13348 Resurfacing Project), http://gov.bc.ca, via Wayback Machine.
https://web.archive.org/web/20260312044418/https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/transportation-infrastructure/contracting-to-transportation/highway-bridge-construction/unofficial-tender-documents/project-no-13348-0000

Heaven knows 40 years

Dry Gulch Bridge No. 2827

Constructed under B-2818

Substructure (footings) awarded to G.W. Carlson Construction Ltd
Awarded Oct. 4, 1984 (Inq) @ $827,749
Superstructure (steelwork, deck) awarded to Brittain Steel Ltd.
Awarded Nov. 6, 1984 (Inq) @ $6,784,029

Steel arch bridge (under deck)
2 twin steel box girder arches
Length 288 m
Width Deck ~22 m
One ~175 m arch span
Straight tangent

11 Spandrel columns on south side; 9 spandrel columns on north side, making 20 total
The arch has 14 spandrel columns located on the arch span,two of which are at the arch's footings (the start of the arch). Six (6) spandrel columns are on land.

Combined contract prices: $7,611,778
Final payment to contractors $9,361,589.45
Actual total cost $10,389,267
(Datafile A, Stinson Commission Brief, A27)
(expenditures to Oct. 27, 1987)

(Vsun, May 29, 1985, A3)

Dry Gulch Bridge under construction by BC MOTT licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Dry Gulch Bridge

This brown coloured arch span doesn't make itself very obvious, but the thing it goes over makes up for it.

Dry Gulch forms a natural barrier between the two sides of the project.

Tenders for the substructure were called September 11, 1984 (MH, Aug. 29, 1984, p. 1A)

The substructure was awarded on Oct. 4, 1984. G. [Gordon] W. Carlson Ltd was slated to employee 20 and complete the work by February 1, 1985. The work they were to perform included:
"Two reinforced concrete abutments, two reinforced concrete arc sprinting's, 12 reinforce concrete columns footings and placing backfill at the abutments." (MH, Oct. 17, 1984, p. 1A)

The superstructure was awarded on Nov. 6, 1984. Brittain Steel was slated to begin November 26 and employ 90 workers on their side (Vsun, Nov. 15, 1984, F7) (MH, Nov. 14, 1984, p. 1A). Their work was described as comprising the steel arch, steel spandrel (under-deck vertical) columns, the reinforced concrete bridge deck, concrete overlay and the parapets and railings. (Ibid)

Dry Gulch Bridge *Continued*

Top L Dry Gulch Bridge construction 12 by BC MOTT Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0
Left, top R Others Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald MH, May 14, 1986

Other firms which bid for the superstructure included Canron Inc., Verigin Construction and Dominion Bridge.

An exact date on which the bridge was completed as to allow for traffic to cross is unclear . There are few sources, but all line-up in it being in Q3 1985.
The MOTH reported it opened in late-summer, before Labour Day. The Ashcroft Journal's Oct. 1. 1985 ed. said it was "now open to single-lane traffic". (Ashcroft Journal, Oct. 1, 1985, p. 16)
Its opening meant easy access between the Hope & Merritt sides.

Brittain Steel announced on July 10, 1986 that they were shutting down their plant. They had applied for bankruptcy the day before. (Notice, Prov., Jul. 22, 1986, p. 63)
(Prov. Jul 8, 1986, p. 18) (Notice, Prov. Sep. 10, 1986, p. 26)

Carlson continues today as the Carlson Construction Group .

OVERRUNS

Due to issues with the footings, Dawson Construction had to carry out unanticipated excavation of the footings under a pre-existing contract. Fractured rock necessitated continuing excavation and stabilization during construction. (Brief, p. 36)

A Death

On June 21, 1985, worker Richard Lloyd Gabrielson fell to his death at the bridge. He was 23 and survived by his wife and two children. He was working for Brittain Steel at the time.

Makeover

During 2017, the bridge was given a major refurbishment.

Starting in spring, Kingston Construction rehabilitated the bridge. They resurfaced the deck, and replaced both the expansion joints and the abutment bearings (which connect the bridge to the substructure).

COWI North America did the design and engineering work for the rehabilitation project.

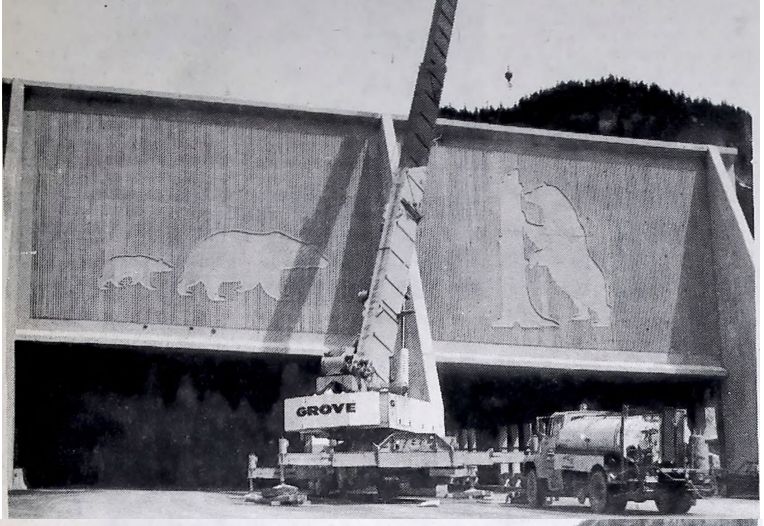
On December 4, the Province announced that the work had been completed. They reported the cost to be $5.1 million.

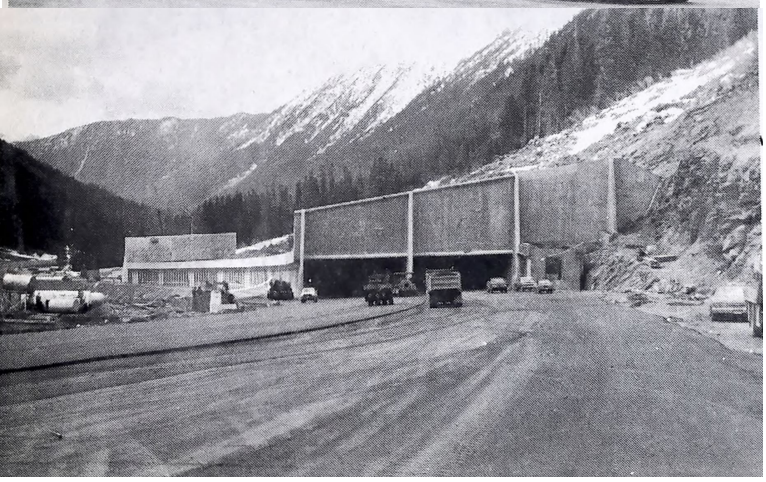
Duncan, Josh. "Work Begins Soon on the Coquihalla Dry Gulch Bridge." KamloopsBCNow, Feb. 20, 2017. https://www.kamloopsbcnow.com/watercooler/news/news/Provincial/17/02/20/Work_begins_soon_on_the_Coquihalla_s_Dry_Gulch_Bridge/

Trudeau, Megan. "Rehabilitation Work Done at the Dry Gulch Bridge on the Coquihalla." Dec. 4, 2017, KelownaBCNow, Dec 4., 2017. https://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/Provincial/Rehabilitation_work_done_at_the_Dry_Gulch_Bridge_on_the_Coquihalla/

"Work Set to Begin on Dry Gulch Bridge This Spring." Merritt Herald, March 10, 2017. https://www.merrittherald.com/work-set-to-begin-on-dry-gulch-bridge-this-spring/

News Release B.C. MOTI, December 4, 2017, https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2017TRAN0286-002008



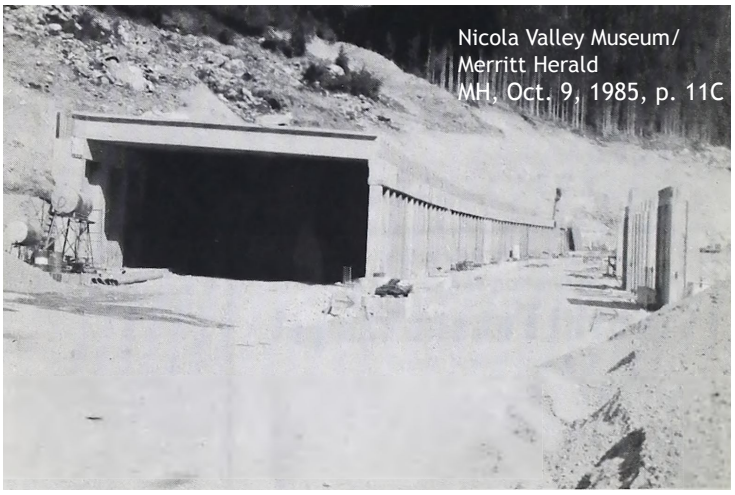


Nicola Valley Museum/Merritt Herald
MH, May 14, 1986 (both)

THE GREAT BEAR SNOWSHED

CANADA'S LARGEST ROAD SNOWSHED

Has dark secrets.....



Nicola Valley Museum/
Merritt Herald
MH, Oct. 9, 1985, p. 11C

The Great Bear Snowshed is an icon. The crown jewel of the Coq sits ½ to ⅔ the way up the 8% climb towards the 1244 m summit along Boston Bar Creek.

It's designed to allow for traffic to be unimpeded by avalanches, saving time, money and snow removal hassle. The route continues via the Ottomite bridge and up the sunny side of the valley.

The Ministry was lucky to have only needed a single shed. Back in 1977, Alex Fraser publicly stated he expected there would be multiple sheds.

The snowshed was designed by Choukalos, Woodburn, McKenzie & Maranda (CWMM). It was built under the supervision of the Ministry's Bridge Branch (yes, that's how they did it). It was designed to use cast-in-place techniques during construction.

Great Bear is one of the highlights of driving the Coquihalla (ignoring sight distance and slow trucks). It's a unique symbol, like a fingerprint. Yet 40 years ago, it was the subject of pure calamity.

Together with the, Ladner Creek Bridge, the McKay Commission identified the snowshed as having the most contract changes out of any Bridge Branch project. Both were also subject to alleged criminal behaviour. (Inq, p. 29)

Of the twelve bidders for the shed, controversial J.C. Kerkhoff Construction & Sons won the contract to build the Great Bear snowshed on June 21, 1985. They were a non-unionized employer, and had indirectly almost caused Expo 86 to be cancelled. It's a bit more complicated than that. They won a contract to build part of the Expo site and labour unions went bananas. Bennett threatened to cancel Expo over the resulting scandal. The completion date was set for November 30, 1985, only 5 months' time. Initially, Kerkhoff was supposed to have the site by June 30, but due to geotechnical complications in the grading contract, limited work only began July 17 at the southern part of the shed.* (Brief, p. 40)

Full access was achieved c. August 20. (Inq., p. 31)**. According to Kerkhoff president Bill Kerkhoff, they were to start on July 1, but they "didn't get to a start" until August 15. (Chwk. Prog.,Sept. 25, 1985, 12B)

*The Commission reports this as 'around' July 16, also (Commissioner Testimony p. 356)
**The Ministry's Brief to the Commission says late August (p. 40)

The delay was caused by issues with grading contract Box Canyon - Great Bear C-2812 being undertaken by Ledcor. They found “unsuitable subsoil and unsound rock” on the Great Bear Snowshed’s footprint. Furthermore, extra rock work also had to be done at the site, and a ‘special foundation fill’ also required. (Brief, p. 30, 40, grading table)

The initial plan was to get gravel for the site from Shylock pit, down the Boston Bar Valley. The gravel supply at Shylock pit was diverted to be used for roadway work. This change meant that Juliet pit became the source of gravel for the Snowshed. Trucks carrying gravel would need to go up/down the Zopkios Hill, past Dry Gulch and Coquihalla Lakes to go to and from the pit.

These series of calamities meant that the work had to be continued through the winter, a cumbersome task that was not part of the plan.

Working in the winter on a snowshed, in the winter, in an avalanche path, which the snowshed is supposed to protect you from - does not typical working conditions. As a result of the cold, productivity was reduced. Materials had to be hoarded to protect them from the weather. Snow removal and heating were also needed.

Work on the Snowshed needed to proceed quickly so that the roof could be put-on.

A mudslide hit in early-November which led to a setback in progress, and the threat of avalanches loomed large.. Workers had to take a basic avalanche safety course and wear avalanche beacons at all times when on-site. The Coquihalla Avalanche Team had to monitor the site to allow for work to proceed through avalanche season. They knew how many workers were on site, make judgements based on forecasts and potential snow accumulation that would cause avalanches low.

When the roof of the snowshed was finished, it should have had a protective waterproof layer of membrane installed. However, seemingly because of the urgency, a protective gravel layer was place on the roof without the membrane installed. With Springtime, the gravel was removed and the membrane placed.***

By early-mid January, the snowshed was estimated to be 85% complete, only requiring the end walls and running deck. (HS, Jan. 15, 1986, p. 10). In July 1987, the Sun reported the shed had been completed in February 1986. At the same time, reporting indicated that Kerkhoff had failed to pay subcontractors. One was bankrupt Krown Construction Corporation, owed $200,000. (Sun, Jul. 16, 1987, B1)

***The Brief mentions the membrane was partly applied for winter, further evidence is needed to reach a conclusion

Questionable

“We've never had a project that started off on the wrong foot like this one did.” Branch Director Len Johnson (Commission Transcript, p. 417-18]

On August 28, 1985, Kerkhoff told the Ministry that the company would incur substantial costs because of the winter conditions it would it be encountering on the project.

By September, Kerkhoff began to file work order claims preemptively for future work. These were called “over-progress estimates“.

Uh-oh!

When testifying before the Commission, Bridge Branch Director Len Johnson testified that Kerkhoff had repeatedly threatened to quit the job. He told them that:

“Everywhere in the documents [job files presented to the committee] there are threats that the contractor was going to lay down tools and those were not idle threats.“
(Commission Transcript, p. 372)
(VSun, Oct. 20, 1987, p. 1)

He continued and gave his perspective to what had happened.

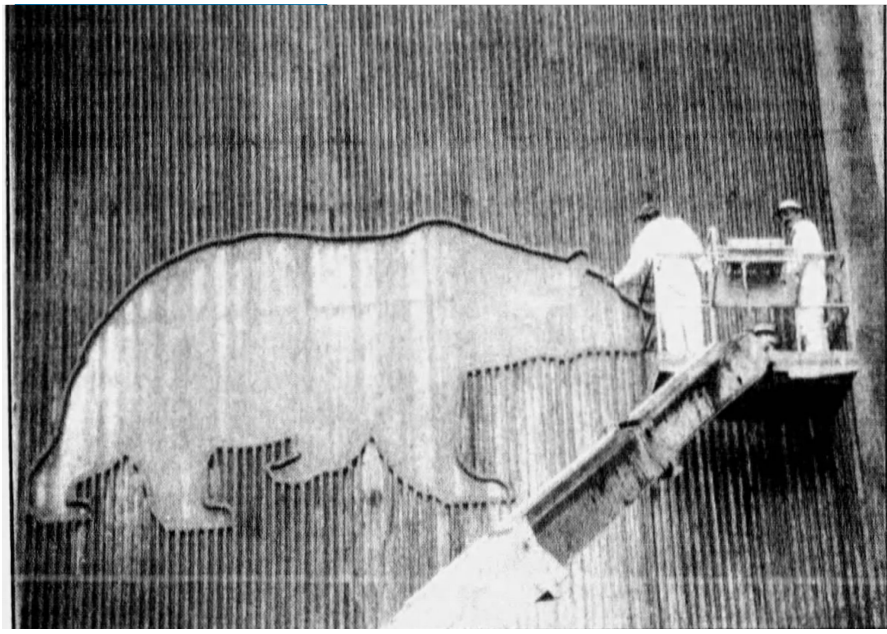
"In September, the end of September, the progress estimates, the invoices for extra work started arriving and soon after that there was a deluge of them and once a week, I would say, there were phone calls from Kerkhoff Construction, 'When are we going to get paid for all the extra work we've done? We have commitments. We have payroll to meet...[...]...In an extreme measure the branch processed an extra work — processed a progress estimate with some of the quantities in excess of what had actually been performed. This was signed by a branch official on the understanding that this payment was for work that the contractor had actually performed. It was something that the branch has never done before, and I imagine it will never do again, but I think that is what they're referring to, the over-progress." *[Len Johnson, Commission Transcript, p. 361]*

In short, Ministry staff processed falsified work orders (i.e."over-progress reports".) Although, an appendix to the final report coundicts that & claims that ministry staff were the ones to alter the O.P.E.'s. (Inq, Schedule B10, A45)

Regarding blame, the matter was never prosecuted in court. Negotiations did occur. Fault was not really determined. The Commission does not suggest that they were to blame The staff's error in processing the 'estimates' has been chalked up to unfamiliarity (Johnson) and inexperience (Harvey, C.C.). Could this have been done due to negligence, or did mens rea have existed in this case to constitute a criminal act? From this position without the documents to look at, it's nigh-on impossible to conclude anything.

The good news is that these claims were not paid, but the extra work that was 'forecasted' did occur during winter. Much of the money that Kerkhoff had demanded preemptively was given for that work (which did occur)
The Commission was satisfied that the issue was resolved.(Inq. P. 30-32)

Kerkhoff racked up $700,000 in over-progress estimates. They were paid $615,718 in February 1987 for the work they did complete when their payment claims with the MOTH were settled.
(Inq, Schedule B10, A45)



Great Bear Bear. Hope Standard, May 14, 1986, p. 11

R.G. Harvey gave the following analogy to summarize situation in his book "The Coast connection":

"The situation in the fall of 1985 on the snow shed project could best be compared to a man building a house who has completed the main floor with expensive carpeting before the roof is built. He is then told by the roofing contractor as the rain season approaches that the work will not be done unless payment is made in advance. Of course, he has to find the funds in a hurry."

Harvey reiterates that Kerkhoff demanded cash in-advance of completion, Ministry Bridge Branch staff were unfamiliar with this sort of procedure, and inadvertently processed these claims. The claims were never paid out because extra work was performed that winter, overriding the need for the false reports to be paid out.

(Harvey, C.C., p. 193)

On July 15, 1987, Highways Minister Cliff Michael announced that the RCMP looked into the situation and after a "preliminary inquiry", they declined to recommend charges against any parties. He also confirmed there were overruns. (T.Col, Jul 16, 1987, p. 1).

The figure of $409.1 million spent was released by the MOTH. A full investigation was demanded by NDP Transportation Critic Dan Miller (did you know he was Premier?) on July 16, 1987. The rest, was history. Vander Zalm pulled the trigger

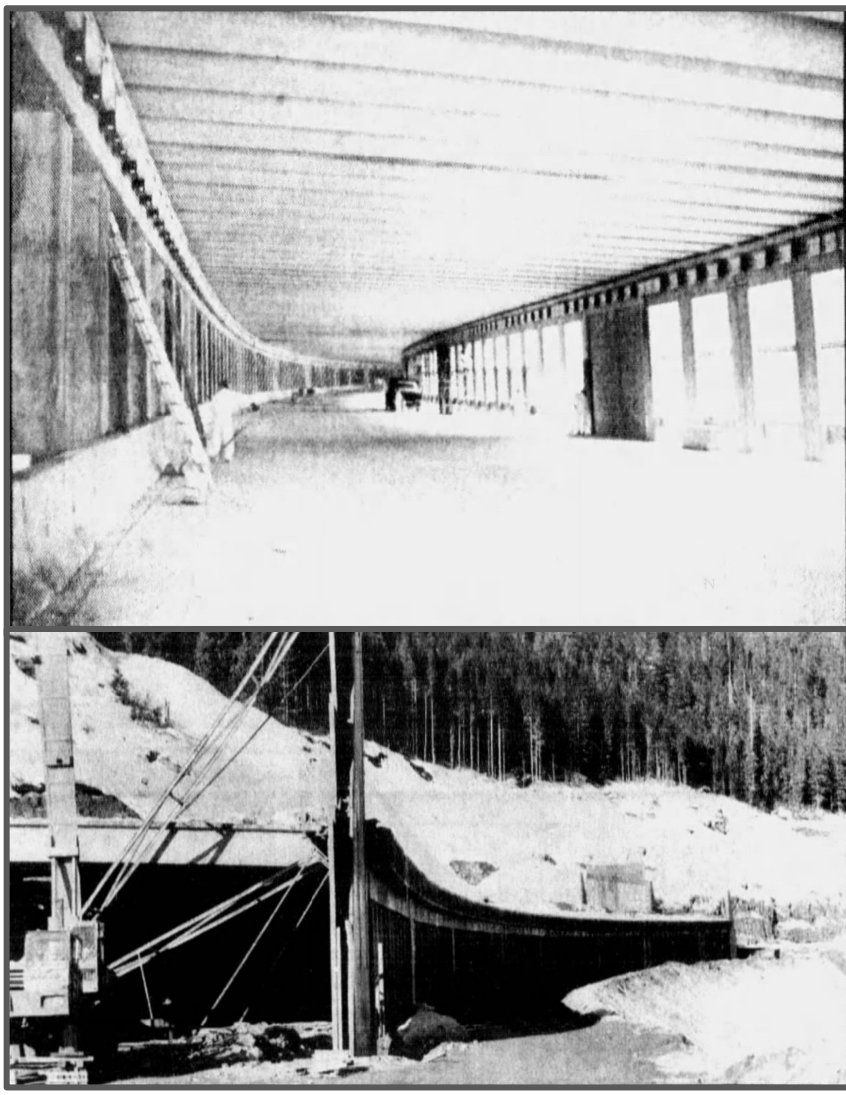
(VSun, Jul. 17, A1) (VSun, Jul. 17, A11) (Commission Testimony, p. 189, Mike Harcourt)

The Commission arrived at a $414.8 million figure in the end.

(VSun, Jul. 17, A1) (VSun, Jul. 17, A11) (Commission Testimony, p. 189, Mike Harcourt)

Both the Great Bear Snowshed and Ottomite Bridge were built road and deck heating provisions (#E-3570; Brief, appendix A for B-2937) This was discontinued in the years after.

The snow shed's electrical system was upgraded in FY 1995/96 (Ann Rpt. 1995/96, p. 20)



(Andrew Holota, HS, Feb. 12, 1986, p.2/HS, May 14, 1986, p. 1)

Issues

From August - Sep. 1987, Peter Bros. Paving
Repaired settlement voids under the deck of the structure under contract
(HS, Aug. 26, 1987, p. 1)

A good omen!

Construction of the Coquihalla by BC MOTT licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

The Great Bear Snowshed has been the subject of numerous accidents. Icing, the stee[gradient, highway speeds, slow trucks, glare and poor sight distance all play their part in soliciting danger.

The snowshed is on an 8% (1-in-12.5) gradient. The central radius is 600 m. The Ministry's policy is to increase the minimum curve radius for every degree of slope over 3%. The superelevation in the Snowshed is either 0.06 m/m or 0.08 m/m. Let's assume Assuming a minimum radius of 390 (100 km/h) at 0.08 m/m - the minimum radius would be 585 m. The minimum radius accounts for all vehicles
(as far as we know and we should know if that is incorrect)

Luckily, the descending southbound lanes have a higher radius than the 600 m. *Heaven Knows* therefore concludes that the design speed of the shed is 100 km/h However, a ballpoint indicator actually determines the safe travel speed.

Blinding glare is known to happen when entering & exiting the snowshed on certain sides.

Icing can occur. The temperature difference causes this especially when the drainage system is damaged. Sediment blockages and membrane damage can let water seep in from the wingwalls.

The ingenious heating system that was installed with the shed had to be discontinued. The melting and freezing of water would create ice and pools. The use of chains through the shed also would wear the concrete and expose the heating coils.

The steep descent at Zopkios means that trucks must creep down the long and steep hill. A safe descent requires a slow pace and keeping off of the brakes. The truck advisory speed leaving Zopkios is 50 km/h. Combine that with 120 km/h+ hooligans and a shed designed for about 100 km/h with poor visibility, it's surprising there aren't more accidents!

In August 2014, the Ministry repainted the dashed lane lines in the tunnel (lucky Google Street View imagery)

REMOVE THE GREAT BEAR?

According to a report by the Colorado Department of Transportation and written by Montana State University and Dynamic Avalanche Consulting, the MOTT has considered removing the Snowshed.

What?

Here's why
The Ministry forecasts that major rehabilitation work will needed 45-55 years into its design life (CDOT, p. 32) (around 2030-2040).

C. 2019, the Ministry believed new LED lights would cost $2-3 million. New waterproof membranes would be needed around 2030, and resurfacing the concrete deck in the next 15 years (from now) at $6.6 million.
Those are 2019 price estimate.

It was also reported that 40 avalanches had reached the shed in 31 years of operation (to about 2017). Overspills (where avalanches block the entrances to a snowshed) do not occur.

(CDOT, pp. 31 & others)

So, what will happen to this landmark?
Nothing has been said officially.....

Ladner Creek Bridge

No. 2853

The Ladner Creek Bridge sits below its older railway counterpart that became a popular photo-site. The ignored & seemingly utilitarian highway bridge was tendered as proj.# B-2876 and subsequently awarded to Wesco Contracting on Nov. 30, 1984. The bridge sits on 32 metre high piers and is 21 metres wide. Originally 135 metres in-length on the drawing board, during construction, soil conditions led to the adding of three spans (one on the south side and two on the north). This led to the bridge becoming 257 metres long with six spans.

Serious legal and pecuniary ramifications resulted from the bridge's modifications. The contractors legally fought the Ministry to be compensated. (Brief, pp. 42-44) It was the Great Bear Snowshed's bad, actually a bridge brother.

The contract for the bridge had been awarded to Wesco Construction on November 30, 1984, and at that time the contract called for a 135-metre long steel stringer bridge, which would accommodate traffic on a 21 m wide deck and supported by concrete piers.

The plan was to use a lot of fill for the approaches to the bridge, but that plan fell through.

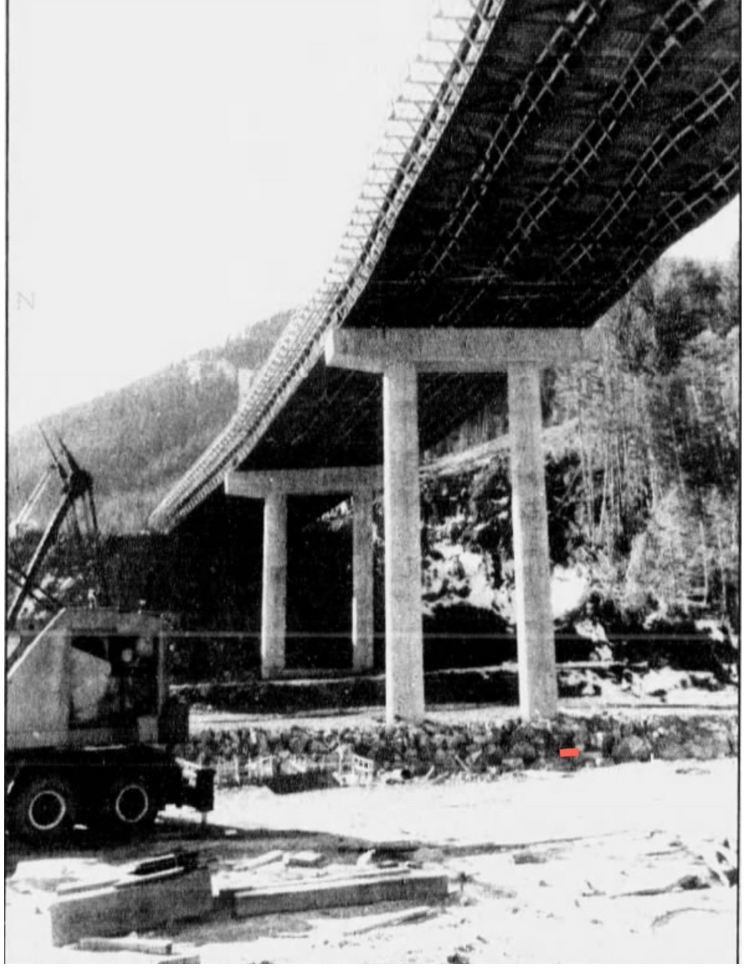
The subsoil present under the proposed southern approach couldn't support the earth fill required for it.
The fill that intended to be used for the northern approach was taken from a cutting close to the bridge and it was found to not suitable for use.
In late December 1984 (near Christmas), Ministry officials opted to replace the northern fill approach with an 82 m extension of the structure. The cost of bringing in fill was outweighed by extending the length. (Commission Transcript, pp. 390-396)

Likewise, the southern end fill idea was abandoned and the bridge was also extended 40 m (one span) southwards. A subcontractor could barely cope with the additional work and the deck was built during a period of poor weather. (Brief, pp. 43-44)

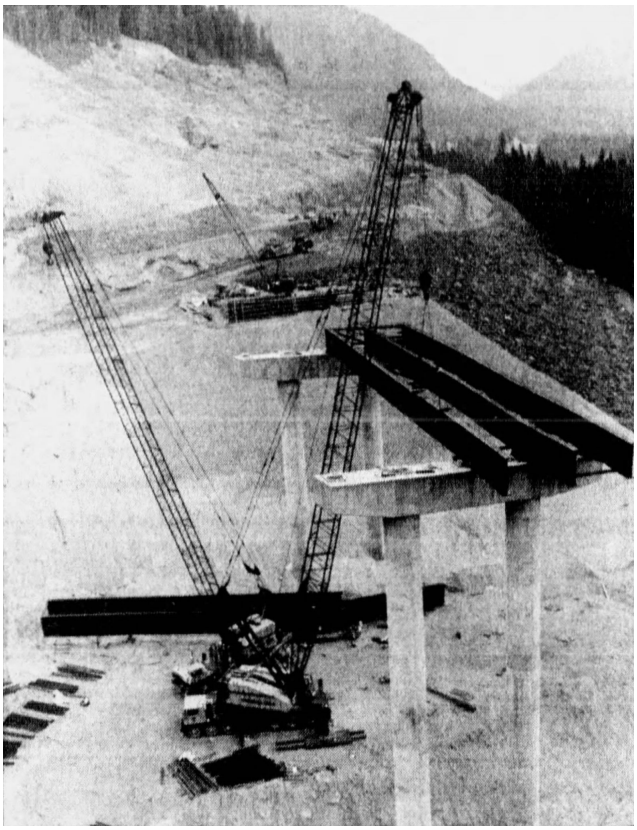
The process of building had been bridge was altered from the original plan, and that included the piers. As a consequence, more precise and expensive construction techniques were needed. (Brief, Phase 1 Bridges)The deck also had to be rushed for completion.

Reportedly, the revised structure's design drawings were not issued due to the belief the bridge could just be copied and pasted. (Inq, Schedule B8)

(Brief, pp. 43-44)



Ladner Creek Bridge, Hope Standard/Andrew Holota HS, Feb. 12, 1986, p. 5



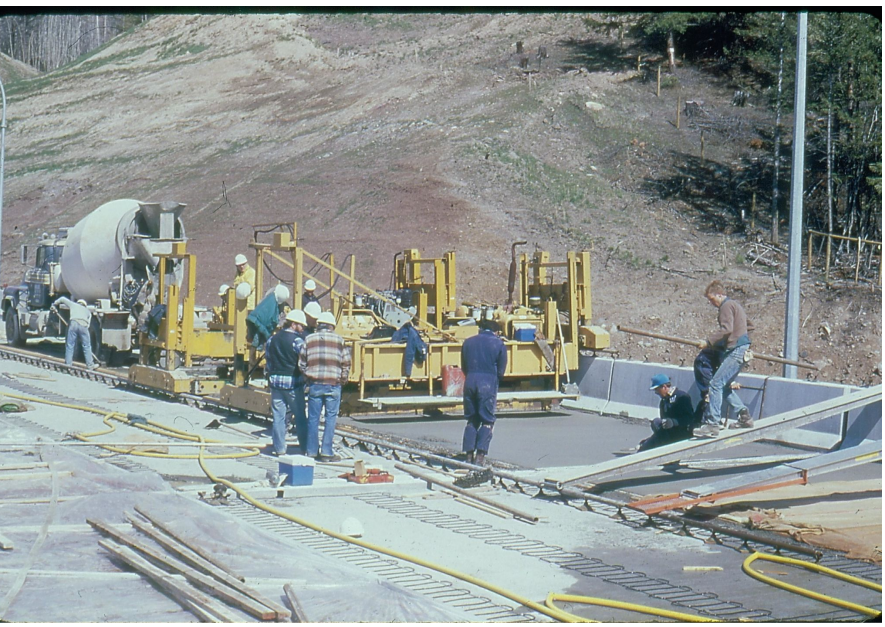
Ladner Creek Bridge earlier on
(Hope Standard, May 14, 1986, p. 13)

Steel Supplier

On the Ladner Creek Bridge project, a steel supplier was worried about a sub-contractor's ability to handle extra costs of the steel because payment could not be received until the steel was in-place.

Ministry officials are then said to have altered progress estimates to show that the steel in-question had actually been installed. After this, the Ministry stepped in to buy the steel for the project directly from the supplier in-case the subcontractor found itself in financial hot-water. (Inq, Appendix, A45) (Brief, p. 44)

Worker John Heppell had a 12-metre fall whilst working at the site on March 6, 1986. He survived his order (HS, Mar. 12, 1986, p. 1)



Ladner Creek Bridge

Constructed under B-2876

Awarded to Wesco Contracting
Awarded Nov. 30, 1984 @ $2,405,840

Steel plate- girder bridge supported by five steel girders sat on five concrete piers & two abutments
6 spans
Length 257 m
Width Deck ~21 m

Contract price: $2,405,840
Final payment to contractors $9,833,763.89
Actual total cost $10,344,884 (Datafile A, Stinson Commission Brief, A27)
(expenditures to Oct. 27, 1987)

Late 1984 or early 1985 (Rocks in foreground are for the diversion of Ladner Creek

Ministry staff visit a site during construction of the Coquihalla in 1985 by BC MOTT Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

The plans for the diversion hadn't been readied for tendering with the neighbouring contract and it was added to C-0760 (Brief, p. 35)

Rushing the deck, 1986

Construction of the Coquihalla circa 1986 by BC MOTT Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

"What the problem is we have to get enough funds for all of em and I don't think that will be very easy talking - when you're talking 1986 I don't think it's possible to get the funding for the Coquihalla." -Alex Fraser, c. spring or summer 1984 (CBC Report TV by John Daly)

Garbage! Absolute Garbage! -Alex Fraser when asked about overruns May 16 1986 in a CBC Report

McKay Inquiry Commission

In July 1987, information on the shortcomings of the Coquihalla led to an investigation being formally demanded by NDP Transportation Critic Dan Miller on July 16, 1987. Soon after, Premier *Wilhelmus Nicholaas Theodore Marie van der Zalm* (better known as Bill Vander Zalm) obliged and ordered that the Commission be formed to investigate the overruns on the Coquihalla and other unrelated highway projects with overruns.

Scope of Changes

The Commission's Final Report lists a number of changes that raised costs. Listed after are changes R.G. Harvey thought should be included in *Coast Connection*.

Think for a minute, would the removal of any of these items make the Coquihalla less safe or non-functional? Is their absence mandatory if it makes the highway unsafe or non-functional?

Firstly

All definitions here are construed to as what they would've meant in the 1980s. The definitions are written in present tense, as if it the present were the 1980s. Laws have changed.

Appropriation - a set of money to be used for a particular purpose." In this case the setting aside of money to be used by a government for a specified cause. (Cambridge Dictionary, 'appropriation')

Consolidated revenue fund this is basically the government's earnings account. Monies taken "from and out" of it by a "supply act" (see definition) (FInancial Administration Act, SBC 1981, c. 15, s. 9)

Vote - in this context, this is an appropriation which Is made under the Financial Administration Act and is contained within the government's budget estimates. Each vote funds something for a general purpose. There are also sub-votes within votes, dedicated to specific things. The particular votes pertinent to the Coquihalla scandal were Vote 69 for Highway Operations and Vote 74 for Economic Approval. Economic Renewal was split between the Coquihalla and the Annacis Island system. The Ministry also moved items from Vote 69 to 74, obfuscating things. *Financial Administration Act, SBC 1981, c. 15, s. 20; Inquiry*

Special Warrant - an instrument used when the legislature is not sitting and there is an urgent need for expenditure (funds). They are issued by the Lieutenant Governor at the request of the Treasury. who in-turn is urged by the appropriate government Minister.
The standard for their issuance is when "..there is no appropriation for the expenditure or that the appropriation is exhausted or insufficient, and that the expenditure is urgently and immediately required for the public good.." (Financial Administration Act, SBC 1981, c. 15, s. 21)

The following two are ways were how a contractor could be paid by the MOTH for additional factors

Unit Price Letter

"A letter of agreement between the contractor and Ministry that additional work will be done at a designated rate and is joined to the original contract and added to the schedule" (Brief, p. 14)

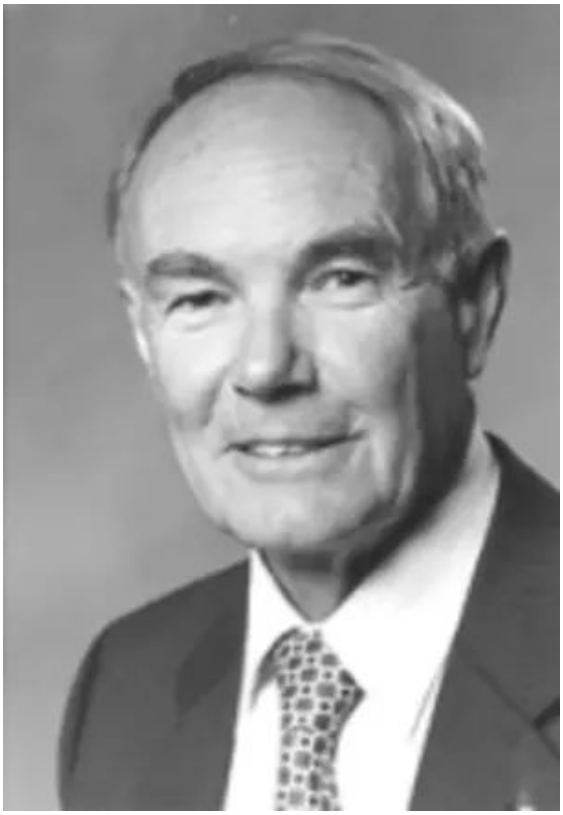
Extra Work Order

Usually used where an amount of work is smaller - "provides payment for only documented expensive such as labour, equipment rental (at published ministry rates which form part of the original contrast), material, plus 20% overhead and profit

Scope of Changes >

McKay: Greater access to Hope & Merritt a added chain-up areas
Snow shed added
Toll booth adde
Runaway lanes
Coldwater bypass route
Truck passing lanes
Added summit lighting
Provision for wider than 8-ft median

Harvey: Changeable message signs
Travellers radio
Concrete median barriers
Added width on bridge decks
Debris torrent protection
Addition of environmental protection program
Avalanche protection (incl. trams)
Maintenance depot and work site at summit



By Order-in-Council 1546/87 of July 31, 1987 - McKay was appointed to examine the Coquihalla project AND other highway projects that saw overruns in the same time frame. The due date for his report was September 30. The date was extended to November 6, and once more to December 31. He submitted his report to cabinet on December 21, 1987. (1956/87, Sep. 28, 1987) (2235/87, Nov. 5, 1987)

McKay recruited the necessary people. He retained both his staff and professionals. Secretary Irwin Henderson; Lawyers Chuck Francis Murphy and George McIntosh‡ of FVW&M (Farris) LLP as legal counsel;, forensic accountant David Hooper & Henry Pankratz both of Clarkson Gordon Chartered Accounts (now E&Y) . On the engineering side, McKay retained Robert Tribe of Tri-Man Consultants and Research Eng. Tim Stinson. After he assembled the 'A' team needed to request the necessary documents from different entities and subpoena people to testify. Public hearings had to be organized and nine ended up being held in Kamloops, Vancouver and Victoria

In issuing his report, he made recommendations comprising around 2050 words.

Douglas L. McKay had been the regional manager of the GVRD and both the chief engineer, head Commissioner of the GVWD and the GVS&DD. He had recently retired when we was appointed as Commissioner to head the "Commissioner Inquiry into the Coquihalla and related highway projects".

Douglas. L. McKay Obituary, Van. Sun/Prov. Obits, Fair Dealing
https://vancouversunandprovince.remembering.ca/obituary/douglas-mackay-1065707045)

‡McInstosh later became Kings' Counsel and was a judge from 2013–2023. He's still practising. Murphy and Pankratz have since passed - others n.k.

The Coquihalla Commission Summarized:

- Government took money from the consolidated revenue fund using special warrants to fund the Coquihalla. This is *supposed* to be used when the funds are *urgently* needed. In doing this, they bypassed legislative approval using the mechanism three times to provide funding for the Coquihalla. These figures add up to at least $300 million or more. The two 'votes' investigated were Vote 69 for Highways and vote 74 for economic renewal (Coquihalla & Annacis) *(exact funds not calculated for this magazine)*
- The Ministry moved ancillary projects from Vote 74 to Vote 69 in Jan. 1986, which messed with the tracking of funds for the Coquihalla & associated project.
- That the political manipulation was done for political gain, with no specific blame placed on anyone person. Hopper said he found no evidence of fraud as everything did get paid for.
- Ministry had horrible estimating, Estimates were not based on precise and measured calculating/ According to former D.M. R.G. Harvey, the Ministry never forecasted over a fiscal year ahead (see next page)Estimating for 20 active contracts on a single large-scale highway project had never been done either.
- Ministry personnel did certainly have some blame in this (who and what for we won't mention)
- Proper assessment of sites could not be done because of the timeline. Errors were prevalent in drawings, leading to extra work
- Modifications to contracts where normally where they'd be re-tendered upped costs. This was not normal practice.
- Added scope of changes (frankly some of these are safety necessities)

R.G. HARVEY was not particularly pleased about many aspects of the commission, especially the media zeitgeist around it.

He criticized the news coverage of the scandal, and firmly believed it had tarnished the reputation of both the MOTH ((Harvey, C.C., 203) and that ofB.C. consulting firms. (Harvey, C.C., p. 206).

His actual view of the Commission were *far* more nuanced than it being a slanderous witch hunt & smearing campaign against the aforementioned. He had his fair criticisms like interrogative witness examination sans counsel** saying "[the Commission] cannot avoid the label of a kangaroo court".*(Harvey, C.C., p.203) He did appreciate the commissioner's *commendations* of the Ministry. The Commission came to the conclusion that Cabinet & the Treasury Board misled the Legislature, while the Ministry and others had also messed up. (Harvey, C.C., p. 203] The Commission had also not interviewed all the pertinent figures. Bennett was a massive exception, as was Waterland - the man whose constituents wanted it built.

**Hugh Curtis had former MLA Gary Lauk as counsel during his testimony. He invoked political privilege to many questions

The Commission did not take testimony from contractors and consultants. The only consultant testimony was for the snowshed debacle (Harvey, C.C., p. 202) Considering those groups were on the frontline of the cost overruns, a huge hole was left unfilled in reaching the exposed truth. Cabinet privilege (Hugh Curtis) also hampered fact finding. McKay and his team basically had three months to trudge through reports, testimony & data to prepare the report. They were given two extensions, but still, was ~4 mos. 20 days adequate? For the potential depth of detail in the Coquihalla construction, it's amazing what he was able to do. (Harvey, C.C., pp. 202-203)

*Witnesses also testified in groups with others sworn-in too

The Commission only got to interview Finance Minister Hugh Curtis, Alex Fraser and Bill Bennett's principal secretary/lawyer Bud Smith (by then MLA for Kamloops) on the political front. Obviously, Bennett is missing from that list. When Fraser spoke he, he needed to use an amplification device because his larynx had been removed due to lung cancer.
(Harvey, C.C., p. 202)
According to Harvey, the Ministry rarely if at all forecasted more than a fiscal year (12 mos) ahead. It was not regular practice and given the mountainous terrain of B.C & not knowing every factor involved. They had to start doing it at some point, and the Coquihalla caused that to be the case. Phase III would have a spending cap of $225 million imposed. (Singer, J. Gregg, "Okanagan Connector Inception Report." 1988)

Harvey makes an interesting statement:
"What Bill Vander Zalm thought he was doing when he called for a commission of inquiry into Bill Bennett's highway, instead of having it examined by a bipartisan House committee, is known to him alone." *(Harvey, Head on!, p. 136)* In Coast Connection, he mentioned the NDP would likely have accepted a bipartisan house committee investigating the matter.. For his part, Highways Minister Cliff Michael floated the idea of a judge as the inquisitor. (Harvey, C.C., p. 202) (Vsun, Jul 24, 1987, A3)

Notice how he calls it Bennett's Highway - Harvey really believed it was!

The truth of it is, to *Heaven Knows,* the commission was not holistic. They did pretty well though. The failure to interview consultants, contractors and grill politicians meant not every stone was turned over. The Commission's recommendations were listened to
and acted upon (how many weren't not known). Those 2050 odd words
had impact. Reactions from the press and citizens were highly negative (naturally). Moreover, Hooper had *to* chose 15 of 100 qualifying contracts to review in-depth
(Vsun, Oct 21, 1987, B10)

For phase I of the Coquihalla, the cost was about 165.9% of the estimate.

**We didn't outright verify this. They would be allowed Legal representation by the Inquiry Act, RSBC 1979 c. 198, s.4. Why were the politicians allowed the counsel on the stand if what Harvey alleges was the case for staff?

The new Coldwater Maintenance Yard around 1986

Coldwater Yard Trucks by B.C. MOTT
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Maintenance Buddies

In 1987, the Vander Zalm government privatized road maintenance contracts

Before 1988, the Merritt and Chilliwack Highway Districts maintained the Coquihalla. Contractors then began to conduct maintenance after privatization

Only contractors for the Nicola Maintenance areas Listed

-Emcon starting Nov. 8, 1988 (privatization)
-HMC starting June 28. 1996 (Emcon chose to not rebid)
-VSA from June 28, 2008
-Yellowhead Road and Bridge from July 1, 2019.

Gov't of B.C.Highwy Maintence Contracts,Jul, 4 2005., https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/transportation-infrastructure/contracting-to-transportation/highway-bridge-maintenance/highway-maintenance/contacts. Accessed May 5, 2026,

(MH Article, Feb. 4, 2019)
https://www.merrittherald.com/new-contractor-set-to-take-over-maintenance-of-local-highways/

(MH, July 3, 1996, pp. 1, 3.)

"New Agreement to Protect Highway Safety." Information Bulletin, B.C. MOTH, June 25, 2004.
https://archive.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/archive/2001-2005/2004TRAN0030-000519.htm

MOTH Annual Reports FY 1987/88 & FY 1988/89

Listen (x4) to the Radio

Along the highway, signs are posted for road advisory radio at 89.9 FM. Although the facts were hard to find, this is station is VF2659-FM. Formerly, the station operated as CBPQ-FM as a CBC rebroadcaster (it was included as such in CRTC rulings). Currently, the transmitter is located 50.15001, -120.72052 NE of Merritt Airport and has 32 watts of power. It's unclear where the Ministry's original 1490 AM station broadcasted from or what its callsign might've been. The earliest indication the frequency 89.9 FM being used is when the MOTH applied for the station at the toll plaza with 10 watts of power around Oct. 1993. (CRTC 9-1993)

50.00286. -120.8775

Radio Locator https://radio-locator.com/info/VF2569-FM
Canadian Radio Directory
https://www.canadianradiodirectory.com/british-columbia/

FOR WHOM THE BOOTHS TOLL

A Tolling Idea

In October 1982, Merritt City Council conjured up the idea of the Coquihalla being tolled to finance the highway. Sherwin Kelly promoted the idea to Alex Fraser. (MH, Oct. 14, 1982. p. 10A) The idea came about because construction had stalled out with the recession. Tolling meant the road could be paid for overtime, recuperating the immediate economic burden.

Fraser wrote back in November 1982, rejecting the idea of tolling because previous tolling had not generated revenue well enough - and further, that it was against the government policy to implement tolls. (MH, Dec. 1, 1982, 1A)

Merritt floated the idea again in March 1984. A motion for a resolution supporting the toll was voted on by delegates of the National Yellowhead Hwy Assoc.. It was overruled by delegates from other provinces.

Merritt Council visited Victoria on April 2 and reiterated their toll proposal. They were told Fraser would take it to Cabinet. At that time, six contracts (3 per side) were ready to be tendered, according to the Gov't. (MH, Apr 4, 1984, p. 1A) (MH, Mar. 7, 1984, p. 1A) (MH, May 2, 1984, 1A-2A)

Tolls were publicly announced in September 1984 alongside the official fast track announcement. Tom Waterland told the Merritt Herald that he had brought the idea up to cabinet after the ideas transmitted to him by Merritt Council and the local CoC. (MH, Sep. 1984, p. 1A) He said he was in-favour of them in May at the Catholic Church Announcement

The reason and timeframe for tolls seemed to vary depending on the person. *Heaven Knows* didn't have time to examine individual opines one-by-one. Fraser had reported the rationale as "for the carrying charges for the set-up in the construction of the Coquihalla. It was evener put on there to pay or the road itself."
(Hansard, 1986, p. 8557)

The new Coquihalla Toll Booth would located very close to the summit, on the Merritt side of the Dry Gulch Bridge, Today, the Coquihalla Lakes Rest Area sits at the former toll booth site. It had 14 lanes and 13 booths, include a small building, a safe and washrooms.

An addition at some point an addjtjkn was added. The booth became a sort of informal rest area. Public washrooms existed.
The previous contract (Dawson) had not been built with the toll booth area dug out and it needed to be graded and excavated.

British Columbia Toll Road By ChrisStubbs licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Toll staff initially stayed at the Coldwater Maintenance Yard. Whether this changed at some point was not ascertained by Heaven Knows,
A story in The Province identined that most staff "commuted" from Merritt.

In 1986/87, new maintenance yards were completed at Merritt, Kamloops and on Phase I near Britton Creek. The Coldwater Yard is on Upper Coldwater Road at exit 22

Two actual rest areas at Britton Creek and Zopkios were completed under the MOTH Building and Services Branch in FY 1987/88/ (Ann. Rpt. 1987/88)

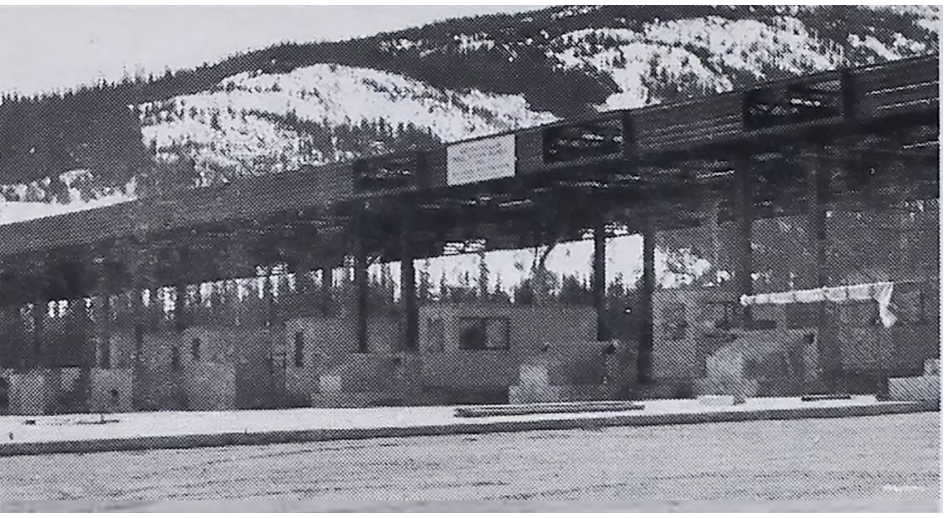
The previous contract had not been built with the provision of a toll booth area along its path. Further excavation and grading was needed. Dawson Construction was charged with this under an alteration to their Mine Creek-Juliet Contract. They began construction in summer 1985 (Inq, Appendix, A56, schedule B12)

WIlliamson Brothers Construction won the contract to build the plaza (Proj. C-3338) on July 30, 1985 (Inq) with a bid of $1,140,000
They were to build the service building, booths and the large steel canopy cover above. (HS, Aug. 14, 1985, p. 5)

The Ministry record $3,983,348 was paid to Williamson Bros for the project (Inq, Datafile, p. 30)

Two other projects, T-4081 for an extension and T4405 for plaza construction. Costwise, T-4081 was funded in 1986-87 & 1987/88 for $326,373 and T-4405 was funded for $629,876 solely in 1986/87.
It's not clear if this was part of the main plaza contract.

Bad Weather,Comfy Booth???



MH, May 14, 1986, Credit: Merritt Herald/Nicola Valley Museum

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When the Tolls started beginning 00:00 May 17, 1986, 16 attendants were employed. That number had surged to "as many as" 32 people in the Summer*

In late 1987, the toll booth was managed by Dave Lyons,. Senior revenue officer was Debra McAulay. Although his precise position was not stated, Shilo Reavie was 2nd in-command, which implies he was above McAulay in-rank. Eighteen people were employed at the booth then.
(Road Runner, Fall 1987, pp. 12-13)

*Unclear, either Summer 1986 or 1987

It seems the operation was under the supervision, but whether it was directly de jure subordinate to the District is not clear. The first District Manager to oversee the operation was Dave Dunliffe, who was seceded by Frank Rizzardo in 1987. (Ibid)

Booth operators put the money into lexan plastic containers which were delivered to a vault using a pneumatic tube system. A contracted armoured car service then transported the money towards Hope. In Fall 1987 the data capture system for the booth consisted of 12 electronic cash registers hooked up to two IBM AT computers that would send any information to another IBM AT at Victoria. (Ibid)

In early 1989, the Toll Manager was identified as Maureen Lambert. At this point collectors (or at least some of them) called themselves "toll trolls"
(Prov. Feb. 29, 1989)

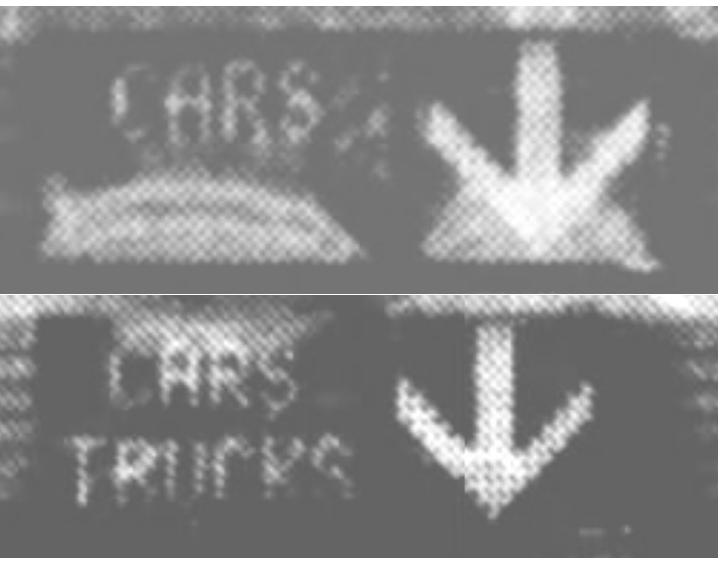
The Data Collector cost $32,514 (Brief)
Tenders were sought for site improvements and an addition to the storage room in Summer 1988 (HS, Aug. 3 1988, p. 11)

VISA and Mastercard were accepted starting July 1, 1987 (MH, July 8, 1987, p. 2) (MH, June 30, 1987, p. 1)

B.C. Ferries Commercial Vehicle Travel Cards were accepted starting December 1, 1993. The cards allowed for an account to be charged, rather than money exchanging hands.
(KTW, Dec. 15, 1993, p. 22)

During FY 1995-96, New laser receipt printers were installed, apparently speeding up printing by 33%. One of two brand new digital video systems which the ministry had designed and developed was installed at Zopkios. That allowed for viewing weather conditions remotely.

On Sept. 30, 1999, Transportation Minister Harry Lali announced that debit cards were now accepted at all booths. Two booths had previously been used to pilot the system during September.
(MOTH, News Release, Sep. 30, 1999, https://web.archive.org./web/20010625070632/http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/bchighways/nr_99/nr75082_99.htm) via Wayback Machine.



Lane Controls

Above are the lane indicators used when the Coquihalla opened to traffic.The originals (above) were installed for $2270 under proj. E-3728. Later, the displays were replaced and lane controls for the booths were infamously shown as open and closed in comic sans, a font considered **amateur** at best.

"Former Premier Bill Bennett had a vision for a highway that would see our province reach its full economic potential. It has succeeded beyond anyone's expectations and has become the foundation for a transportation network that has opened up Canada's Pacific Gateway to North America and the rest of the world. Today's announcement marks the next milestone in that legacy."

-Gordon Campbell, the only (known) B.C. Premier to have a drunk driving conviction (Castanet, https://www.castanet.net/news/BC/42058/Tolls-gone-from-Coquihalla)
For his turn brown nosing, Bennett called Campbell the "best mayor Vancouver ever had." (our observation from a newspaper)

Deathly Transfers

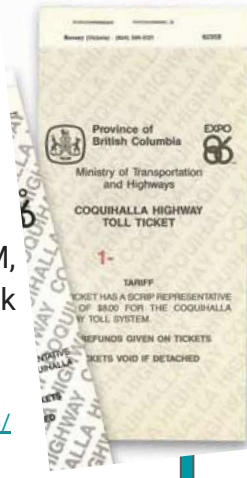
According to Barrie Sanford, funeral homes would conduct
casket transfers at the toll booth so they didn't have to pay the toll

Tolls are off

On final day of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Annual Convention in Penticton Premier Gordon Campbell was giving a speech to the delegates.

Suddenly, he decreed that tolls were coming off of the Coquihalla, effective 1 1:00 pm the same day.

Whilst he delivered that speech at the UBCM, he (allegedly) asked for raise of hands to ask how many attendees were going to take the Coq home. (The Tyee, https://thetyee.ca/Blogs/TheHook/BC-Politics/2008/09/26/UBCMCampbellSpeech/) (Only source on this anecdote



And so at 1:00 pm on September 26, 2008 the Coquihalla become toll-less. They were collected for 22 years, 4 mos, 27 days (8169 days) inclusive of the 26th.

Ministerial Order M214 of Sept. 23, 2008 and OIC 669/04 of Sept. 26, 2009 authorized the removal.

(BClaws, OIC 1206/04https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/oic/arc_oic/0699_2008)

The toll booths and other associated buildings were slated for demolition, and it's unclear if Campbell's promise of employing the toll workers in other roles *appears* to have never came through. The only buildings saved were the washrooms, which were incorporated into a new rest area (Coquihalla Lakes). CTV news seventeen toll workers were laid off. According to the Vancouver Sun, workers were told not to speak to the press.

(Wintonyk, CTV, Oct. 2, 2008,https://www.ctvnews.ca/vancouver/article/premier-faces-heat-at-coquihalla-toll-demolition/)
(Vsun, Sep. 27, 2008, A3)

Top right: prototype and first ticket (sandy) issued (Road Runner, Nov. 2008) (BC OIC dated 734/86)

On October 2, in a cowboy move, Campbell and Falcon personally began the demolition of the toll booths in a CAT digger. Campbell explained that the majority of the materials (probably the metal mostly) would be recycled. All electronics were salvaged. *That means that the funny comic sans "open" and "closed" displays may be out there somewhere.* (HS, Oct. 9, 2008, p. 3) (CBC News, Oct. 2, 2008, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/campbell-revs-up-to-demolish-coquihalla-tollbooths-1.750895)

Around $100,000 was spent in months previous on renovating the Toll Booths. When scrutinized, Falcon said the workers deserved a workplace that doesn't leak and has working toilets. (MH, Oct. 8, 2008 p. 2)

Although a positive and celebrated choice, not everything was 100% hunky-dory.

Merritt RCMP said they lost a good point of closure and location to conduct road checks or carry out Counterattack against drunkards. The Toll Booth allowed for RCMP to receive suspicious persons reports from the toll collectors, giving them a good heads-up notice of potential issues coming into town. The RCMP could also use the booth's cameras in investigations, or even be provided vehicle or suspect descriptions by the booth (or vice-versa). (MH, Oct. 1, 2008). Missing persons could also have been spotted by attendants.

Attendants also spotted dangerous or illegal vehicles/loads and relayed that to CVSE. (Road Runner, Nov. 2007, p. 5). The workers reported from time-to-time that if a driver was short a bit, they'd pitch in their own pocket change so the driver would be able to continue their trip without being sent back ((bid) Would Albertan speeders stop? No, Only -

The plaza served as a beacon of reliability on the highway, where one could always find a source of help or heat. It was a permanently staffed location along a potentially vicious highway in an unpopulated area known for horrible winter conditions that's become a mythos.. A traveller knew it would be there, even if they dreaded the toll. Basic medical assistance, travel advice, advisement of road hazards, water.

Campbell's critics were quick to point out that he had planned to have tolls on the new Port Mann and Golden Ears Bridges. It also came five years after the strange privatization fiasco, where Campbell wanted a private operator to collect tolls for who knows how long. (KDN, Sep. 27, 2008, A1-A2)

Type of vehicle	OIC 734/86 effective April 8, 1986 (opening)	OIC 1791/87 effective September 5, 1987
CLASS 1 (a) **Passenger automobiles,** including those towing campers or trailers. (b) **Commercial vehicles under 6 000 kg** licenced gross vehicle weight, including those towing campers, trailers or other vehicles. (c) **Motor homes, including those towing campers, trailers** or other vehicles. $10	**$8**	**$10**
2. CLASS 2 (a) **2 axle vehicles** 6 000 kg and over licenced gross vehicle weight, including those towing campers or recreational trailers. (b) 2 **axle buses, (c) 2 axle truck tractors without trailers.**	**$16**	**$20**
3. CLASS 3 (a) Vehicles or combinations of vehicles with **3 axles,** other than those vehicles or combinations included in Class 1 or 2 , (b) 3 axle buses.	**$24**	**$30**
4. CLASS 4 Vehicles or combinations of vehicles with **4 or 5 axles**, other than those vehicles or combinations included in Class 1, 2 or 3	**$32**	**$40**
5. CLASS 5 Vehicles or combinations of vehicles **with more than 5 axles**, other than those vehicles or combinations included in Class 1, 2 or 3	**$40**	**$50**
6. CLASS 6 **Motorcycles** as defined under the Motor Vehicle Act .	***Not tolled***	**$5**

Back in '06, Falcon affirmed to the Kelowna CoC that tolls were going to continue for the foreseeable future (at least 5 years) until the road was paid off. (Vsun, Jun. 14, 2006, B2)

It was certainly a popular move. Road and bridge tolls are a multi-generational political football in B.C. W.A.C. Bennett, Campbell and John Horgan have all politically benefited of toll removal. The same phenomena has occurred in New Brunswick.,

Mr. Nieoczym, I've got News!

Columnist Adrian Nieoczym wrote an editorial in the Kelowna Capital News of Sept. 28, 2008. He detailed that Kevin Falcon told him that the billion dollar figure included the ancillary projects that were not part of the Coquihalla. Nieoczym pondered how the McKay accountants messed that up, and desired Falcon's on to become his tax accountant.

Hopefully in the ensuing years, Nieocyzm has not been in trouble with the CRA, because Falcon's fails to consider that the widening of Highway 1 was vital to the Coquihalla success. If the Kamloops, Hope Bypass and Cheam sections were not made into freeways, that would have been quite a gong show. Pedantically, Falcon is mostly right. The Connector isn't referred to as the Coquihalla (anymore or possibly ever). Our opinion? Except for a few Highway 8, Highland Valley and 5A upgrades, all of the ancillary projects were core supporting features for the system. Further, if it wasn't relevant to the Commission, why'd they add up those projects? They did it for a reason - a freeway reason. (KCN, Sep. 28, 2008, A29)

About 58.4 million total vehicles went through the booths
8.2 million commercial vehicles
265,000 motorcycles
Average toll amount (roughly) $14.47
(Road Runner, Nov. 2008)

Full amount?

Most sources say $845 million (News Release Backgrounder, Sep. 26, 2008, 2008OTP0240-001470)
(Penticton Western News, Sep. 28, 2008, p. 13)
(Fletcher, Tom. Black Press Feature, Surrey Leader Daily, Sep. 29, 2008, A5)

FY 2007/08 saw $57,127,695 collected (Road Runner, Nov. 2008)

Heaven Knows could not be bothered to enumerate the cost by looking at material from 1986 to 2008

Did the Tolls Cover the Costs? Well of What? Phase I?

Yes! At the end of fiscal year 1999-2000 (April 1, 2000) the MOTH. The figure $418.8 million was reached at FY end (McKay figure was $414.8 million). Obviously, tolls could have been removed then and there, but they were kept on.

What about all Phases?

It appears, hmm. Yes.

As *Heaven Knows* has revised the McKay Commission's final costs, the $848 million figure is not accurate ($847,846,594). We have found the Phases 1-3 costs to be $811.208 m to $815.289 m (McKay overestimated the Hwy 97C and to a lesser extent Phase II). So yes, it did. (McKay's Phases 2 & 3 figures were estimates for which we have found the real costs). Kevin Falcon looked at the figures in July 2008, and informed had Campbell of them which lead to the decision. Therefore, the removal was premeditated.

The man who wrote the book on the KVR, Barrie Sanford, worked as a toll collector. He shared that once Japanese tourists going to Banff gave him their passports because they believed the Toll Booth to be the border between B.C. and Alberta. (Road Runner, Nov. 2008, p. 6)

DID YOU KNOW? At the time of opening tickets were available in books of twelve. You could get them in-person at the Toll Booth or at the ministerial offices in Merritt, Kamloops, Chilliwack and New Westminster; or even at the ministry's headquarters on Blanshard St, Victoria. They could even be mail ordered with payment by cheque or money order. (Opening Newspaper Ad, various papers, May 1986). The "Coquihalla Revenue System", a system managing the incoming monies from the toll was set up. By March 1987 work was being done to enable payment by visa and mastercard (Ann. Rpt.1986/87, p. 46)

Crime and Coquishment

A small sample of two criminal cases on the Coquihalla:

On August 24, 1986, the toll booth phoned a possible impaired driver that had been turned around on the Hope side. Police arrested two men and a woman. A second woman was held to sober up. (HS, Aug. 27, 1986, p. 2)

Toll workers Ron Cunston and Mike Bowcott relayed a similar story, but no mention of the women was made. The most consistent thing between the stories is that at least one person was on the lamb from Oakalla (perhaps). (Road Runner, Fall 1987, p. 12)

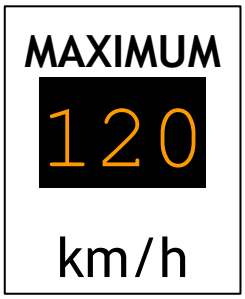
The workers' account says two men were returned to Oakalla. The driver got 90 days in jail over the event, likely after pleading guilty. (HS, Sep. 3, 1986, pp. 3, 4)

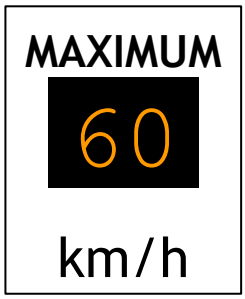
The two accounts are likely the same, but something got added or taken from one of them.

In July 2008 a massive police chase stretching from Langley to the Coquihalla Toll Booth was the result of a crime spree in Langley. (TMS, Jul. 18, 2008, p. 5) Two police helicopters

Fraser had reported: "The toll is installed under government policy to help pay for the carrying charges for the step-up in the construction of the Coquihalla. It was never put on there to pay for the road itself.." He also commented that the first two weeks of operation took in $550 K - & extrapolated that would make $12 million/year.
(Hansard, Jun. 5, 1986 , p. 8557)

Variable Speed Limit System





When the MOTI increased speed limits on many highways in 2014, they also announced that they intended to test variable speed limits on three highways.

The Province decided to implement variable speed limits on three select stretches of highway.

One of the sections of highway selected was the Coquihalla from Portia to the Toll Plaza for 24 km (the others were Highway 1 at Eagle Pass and Highway 99 from Whistler to Squamish.

The speed limits can be changed from the Regional Transportation Management Centre at Cape Horn in Coquitlam. The infrastructure comes equipped with sensors that monitor the visibility, weather, road surface condition, congestion and other factors.

The province announced the installation of the signs on December 2, 2015 at a price of $12.5 million for 47 signs (13 of which would be on the Coquihalla).
They would be tested for 2-3 months before going "live". They were of course, delayed. This was considered to be a pilot, and clearly that pilot became permanent.

On June 1, the MVA Regulations were edited by adding the variable maximum speed sign. This gave legal effect to the signs. The next day, June 2, 2016, Minister Todd Stone announced the signs were being activated that day. (MOTI, June 2, 2016)

According to the caption on this Flickr image by the MOTI, this was the first time the variable speed system was lowered on the Coquihalla (June 6, 2016)

"Variable speed limit sign for traffic control" by B.C. MOTT
https://www.flickr.com/photos/tranbc/27505535455/in/album-72157661878358296
Used under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Did you know?

B.C. OIC 342/2016, https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/oic/arc_oic/0342_2016

Canadian Press. B.C. Highways Fitted With Variable Speed Limit Signs. " *CBC News,* June 2, 2016.
https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/variable-speed-limits-1.3613899
https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/variable-speed-limits-1.3613899

"Enforcable Variable Speed Limit Signs Go Live." *BC MOTI* June 2, 2016. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016TRAN0115-000919 News Release

Fortems, Cam. "Vaiable Speed Signs Now Activated on Coquihalla, Elsewhere." *Merritt Herald,* June 2, 2016.
.https://www.merrittherald.com/variable-speed-signs-now-activated-on-coquihalla-elsewhere/ .

Nagel, Jeff, "Variable speed limits coming to three highways." *Rossland News,* December 2, 2025.

"Variable speed limit signs coming for 3 B.C. routes." *CBC News.* https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/variable-speed-limit-signs-1.3347259

Coquihalla Phase I Original Grading Contracts Table *og-p-1-g*

Proj. No.	Location	FY	Date/ Month awarded	Contractor	Began	Com-plete	Sources
C-3760	NICOLUM -PEERS CREEK **3.0** MI /4.9 km	1978/ 79	DEC.20 .1978	EMIL ANDER -SON	SLATED MARCH 1979	MAR OR MAY 1981	CONFIRMATIO N RECEIVED DEC 28. HS JAN 3, 1979, P. 1., ALSO DEC 6 & 13th
C-0579	DRY GULCH - MINE CREEK 9.3 KM	1983/ 84	AN. MAY 3, 1983	DAWS-ON	C. WEEK OF MAY 9, 1983	NOV 84	Km 48.98 - km 58.32 LARGE PROJECT UNDER ENVIRONMENT AL SUPERVISION. 90% COMPLETE TO END FY 1983/84. INCLUDED DIVERSION OF MINE CREEK TWO WOMEN WERE WORKING FOR DAWSON ON THE PROJECT IN JUL 1983 MH, MAY 4, 1983, 1A; MH MAY 11, 1983, 1A; MH, JUL 14, 1983, 1A
C-4478	BOSTON BAR CREEK (SUMMIT) - DRY GULCH 4.5 KM	1980/ 81	AN JUN.12.80	EMIL ANDER -SON	SLATED JULY 1980 (SAYS JUN IN ANN. RPT.)	OCT 82	LARGE ROCK AND EARTH MOVING 82% DONE END FY 81/82 HS. JUN 18, 1980, p. 1; HS NOV 3, 1982, P 5 km 44.2-km 47.8

PHASE I MAIN GRADING TABLE

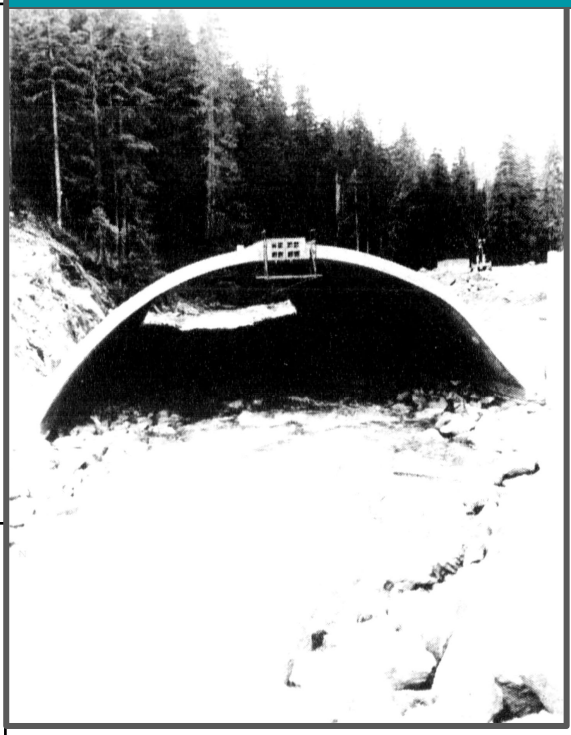
Phase I Grading 1984-85 + Hwy 1 & 3 (Bypass, Jones Creek, Hope - Nicolum

Table p-1-g

PROJ. NO.	LOCATION	AWARD DATE OR MONTH	CONTRACT -OR	BEGAN Note: often inaccurate +	DESCRIPTION	SOURCES/ EXTRA
C-0760	Construction of Peers Creek to Ten Mile Creek, Coquihalla Highway (**3.2 miles**/5.149 km)	(JUN.14.84 INQ)	EMIL ANDERS-ON $5.555M	JUN 84 i	RIVER DIVERSION NECESSARY. EARTH RETAINING WALL (HS, JUN 13, 1984) WATERLAND SAID TENDER WOULD OPEN JUN 8	MH JUN 8, 1984 1A 65% DONE AT 31.3.85 NOV 85
C-2662	Construction of Floods to Hope, Trans Canada Highway ~~(4.9 km)~~ (9.7 km) (or 9.9 km alt)	JUL.4.84 (INQ)	GOODBR-AND CONST $9.880M	JUN 84	GRADE & PAVE SECT. OF HOPE BYPASS. CNR REALIGNED FOR 1.38 KM, AFTER "STRICT ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW". (HR, JUL 25, 1984, P. 1)	70% AT 31.3.85 90% AT 31.3.86
C-2663	Construction of Ten Mile Creek to Sowaqua Creek, Coquihalla. Highway (**2.07 miles**/3.33 km)	JUL.17.84 (INQ).	VIEW CONST $5.886M	JUN 84 ii	ALONG COQ RIVER INCL. TWO RIVER DIVERSIONS, EARTH-BOUND RETAINING WALLS AND TORRENT DEBRIS STRUCTURE. TENDERED JUNE 19 (HS, JUN 13, 1984, P. 1.)	60% AT END 1985/ 84 NOV 85

Phase I Grading 1984-85 + Hwy 1 & 3 (Bypass, Jones Creek, Hope- Nicolum *Table p-1-g*

PROJ. NO.	LOCATION	AWARD DATE OR MONTH	CONTRACTOR	BEGAN Note: often inaccurate +	DESCRIPTION	SOURCES/ EXTRA
C-2683	Construction of Sowaqua Creek to Ladner Creek, Coquihalla Highway (**3.80 miles**/6.11 km)	AUG.7.84 (INQ)	NU-ROAD CONTRACTING $5.164M		GRADING ALONG 'COQ RIVER W/ TWO DIVERSIONs S HAMPERED BY MUDSLIDE TENDER TO CLOSE JUL 11 (HS, JUN 27, 1984P. 2)	95% AT 31.3.86
C-2688	ACCESS ROAD	DAY LABOUR		MAY 84	AUG 84 REBUILDING ACCESS ROAD FOR PEERS CREEK AND 11 MILE WORKS	
C-2694	Construction of Mine Creek to Juliet Creek, Coquihalla Highway (5.9 km)	JUL.11.84 (INQ)	DAWSON $3.168m	AUG 84	COLDWATER RIVER DIVERTED UNKNOWN NUMBER OF TIMES; LARGE ROCK WORK FOR THE DRY GULCH BRIDGE APPROACH. ONE PIPELINE RELOCATION. TENDER TO CLOSE JUL 13 (HS, JUL 18, 1984, P. 2) (HS, JUN 27, 1984, P. 2)	45% AT END 1985/ 84
C-2768 *C G*	Clearing and Grubbing Hope to Nicolum Creek, Southern Trans-Provincial Highway 3 (8.4 km)	AUGUST - SEPT 1984	POOLEY BROS LTD $190,830	AUG 84	CLEARING AND GRUBBING	90% AT END 1985/ 84
C-2944	HOPE-SUMMIT TOTE ROAD				KEEP OVER WINTER	



1 of 3 Armadillo Culverts, Boston Bar Creek Valley /Andrew Holota (HS, Jun. 12, 1985, p. 9)

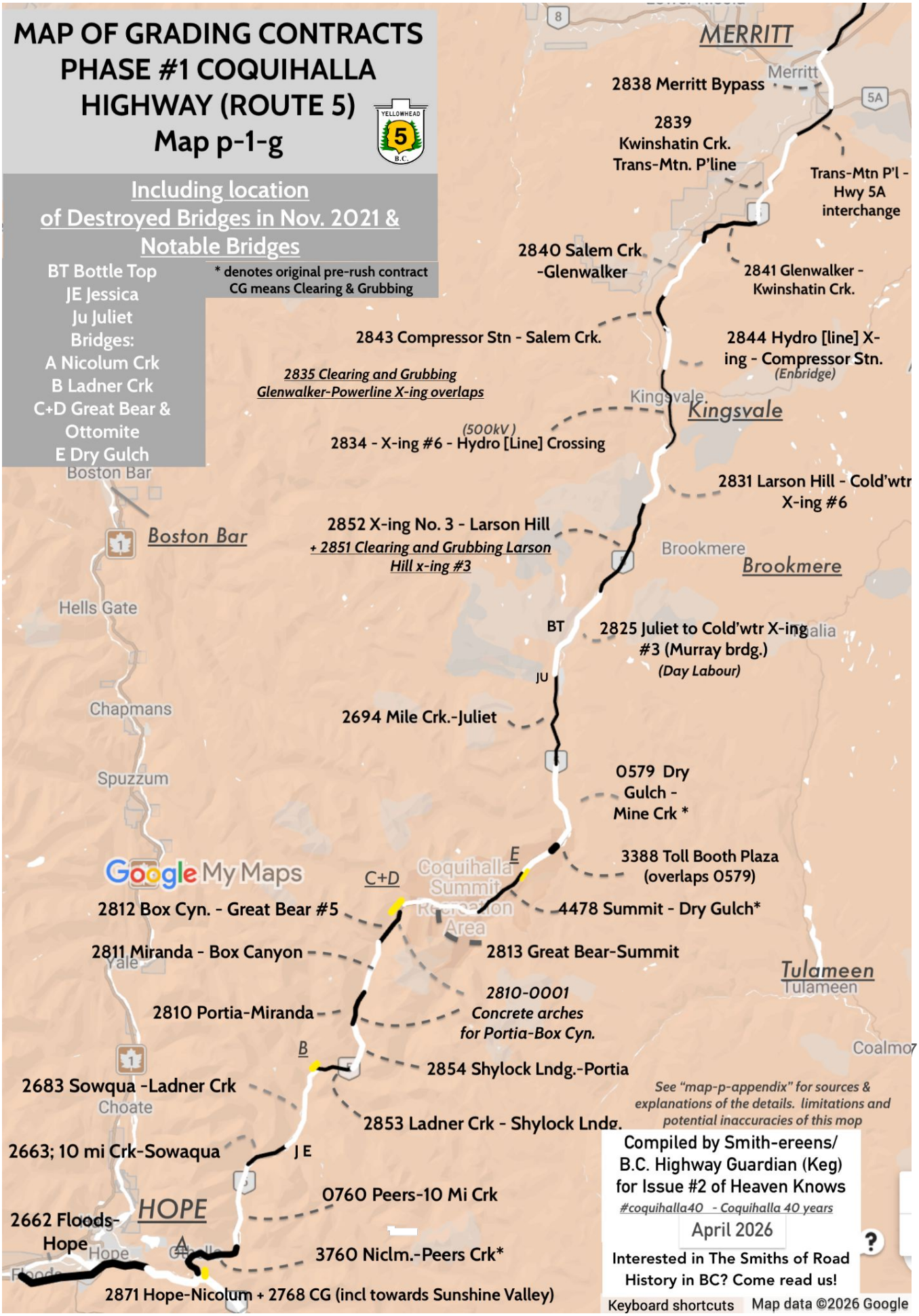
PROJ. NO.	LOCATION	AWARD DATE OR MONTH	CONTRACT-OR	BEGAN Note: often inaccurate +	DESCRIPTION	SOURCES/ EXTRA
C-2772 Juliet*# C-2781 Coldwater# C-2782 Shylock*# C-2783 Rusty# C-2816 Godey *# C-2827 Brodie* C-3060Summit	Aggregate cruising and stockpiling contracts	ALL EXCEPT C-3060 1984/85; C-3060 1985/86	VARIOUS		*BORROW STOCKPILE #PAVING AGGREGATE SHYLOCK PIT 1.25 MILLION TONNES OF AGGREGATE, LARGEST CONTRACT OF ITS KIND TO THIS POINT C-3060 CALLED BECAUSE LACK OF SUITABLE AGGREGATE IN POOR SOIL AREA	ALL COMPLETED BY SEP 1985
Note:	C-2810-2813 *For contracts in Boston Bar Valley, fill had to be 'borrowed' …*	*…from quarries or other grading sites because..*	*..,the area had poor soil quality.*			
C-2810	Construction of Portia to Miranda, Coquihalla Highway (3.0 km)	AN. c. OCT.22.84 OCT.5.84 (INQ)	CANTEX ENGINEE-RING & CONST $3.880m	SEP 84 v	'FIRST' CONTRACT IN BOSTON BAR CREE VALLEY. DIVERSION OF PIPE LINE AND BOSTON BAR CREEK NEEDED SEVERAL TIMES. INCL. AVALANCHE WORKS AND & 2 PRECAST CULVERTS (V.SUN, OCT 22, 1984) SOIL POOR BORROWED SHOT ROCK	40% AT END 1985/ 84 NOV 85 Km 36.1 - 39.1
C-2810-0001	Concrete Arch Construction Portia to Box Canyon, Coquihalla Highway (3.74 km)	AN. JAN.28.85	ARCHITE-CTURAL PRECAST STRUCTURES $966,160	JAN 85	SUPPLY SEVERAL PRECAST CULVERTS (T.COL. JAN 29, 1985, P 3) PROJ DATE OF COMPLETION MAY.15.85	50% AT END 1984 85 DONE JUN 85
C-2811	Construction of Miranda to Box Canyon, Coquihalla Highway (3.47 km)	AN. OCT.5.84 SEP.9.84 (INQ)	EDCO CONST $5.511m	SEP 84 vi	OVER 1.3m M^3 EXCAVATION. INCL CONCRETE CULVERT POOR SOIL (V.SUN, OCT 6, 1984 E11 PDOC OCT.31.1985	MH OCT, 10, 1984, 1A. 25% AT END 1985/ 84 95% AT 31.3.86 Km 36.1- KM 42.8

PROJ. NO.	LOCATION	AWARD DATE OR MONTH	CONTRACT-OR	BEGAN Note: often inaccurate +	DESCRIPTION	SOURCES/ EXTRA
C-2812	Construction of Box Canyon to Great Bear No. 5, Coquihalla Highway (3.32 km) *Included the Great Bear Snowshed substructure base*	OCT.10.84 (INQ)	LEDCOR $6.228m	SEP 84 vii	OVER 2.0m *m^2 OF EXCAVATION. TWO MAJOR MULTI-PLATES INCL. (CHWK PROG. SEP 26, 1984, P. 1. *1m IN 84/85 REPORT	35% AT END 1985/ 84 95% AT KM 31.3.86 42.8-45.8
C-2813	Construction of Great Bear No. 5 to Summit, Coquihalla Highway Highway (4.95 km)	SEP.04.84	EDGEWO-RTH CONST $5.794m	SEP 84 viii	POOR SOIL. TWO MAJOR MULTI-PLATES INCL. FINAL PROJECT IN BOSTON BAR CREEK VALLEY, 750,000 M^3 OF ROCK EXCAVATION	45% AT END 1985/ 84 95% AT 31.3.86 Km 45.8 -Km 50.8
C-2825	JULIET - COLDWATER CROSSING #3 (6.6 KM)	N/A	DAY LABOUR CONST.	AUG 84	GRADING IN COLDWATER VALLEY W/ BORROWED FILL. SIX PIPELINE RELOCATIONS AND SIX BRIDGE FILL APPROACHES. RIVER DIVERSION	45% AT END 1984/ 85
C-3363	SUMMIT-MERRITT TOTE ROAD		DAY LABOUR	DEC 84	DAY LABOUR KEEPING ACCESS ROAD TO MERRITT OPEN IN WINTER	
C-2831	Construction of Larson Hill to Coldwater Crossing No. 6, Coquihalla Highway (4.70 km)	AN. MID-LATE DEC 1984 (DEC.13.84 INQ)	EMIL ANDERS-ON $5.545m	JAN 85 ix	MAJOR ROCK AND EARTH 1.0 M m^3 of EARTH; 400,000 M^3 OF ROCK PDOC OCT.31.85	40% AT END 1984/ 85 Km 84.6 - km 89.35

Phase I Grading 1984-85 + Hwy 1 & 3 (Bypass, Jones Creek, Hope - Nicolum

Table p-1-g

Phase I Grading Contracts Map



PROJ. NO.	LOCATION	AWARD DATE OR MONTH	CONTRACT-OR	BEGAN Note: often inaccurate +	DESCRIPTION	SOURCES/ EXTRA
C-2840	Construction of Salem Creek to Glenwalker, Coquihalla Highway (4.675 km)	AN. JAN.28.85 JAN.16.85 (INQ)	TERCON CONTRA-CTORS $4.961m	JAN 85 xiv	(T.COL. JAN 29, 1985, P 3)	25% AT END 1985/ 84 Km 100.8 - km 105.9
C-2841	Construction of Glenwalker to Kwinshatin Creek, Coquihalla Highway (3.50 km)	NOV.6.84 (INQ)	GEDDES CONTRA-CTING CO $2.347m	NOV 84 xv	EARTHWORKS PROJ DATE OF COMPLETION OCT.31.85	55% AT END 1984/ 85 km 105.9- Km 109.4
C-2843	Construction of Compressor Station to Salem Creek, Coquihalla Highway (2.775 km)	DEC.18.84 (INQ)	J & D CONST $2.183m	NOV 84 xvi	SMALLER PORTION PROJ DATE OF COMPLETION OCT.31.85	MH NOV. 14, 1984, 1A Km 98.6 - km 100.8 40% AT END 1985/ 84
C-2844	Construction of Hydro Crossing to Compressor Station, Coquihalla Highway (2.85 km)	NOV.23 .84 (INQ)	GOODBRAND $1.8206m	NOV 84 xvii	FURTHER ALONG COLDWATER VALLEY (HR, DEC 13, 1984, P. 3) PROJ DATE OF COMPLETION OCT.31.85	15% AT END 1985/ 84 PDOC OCT.31.85 MH DEC.5.84 1A
C-2851 C G	Clearing and Grubbing, Coldwater Crossing [#3] to Larson Hill (6.8 km)	AN. OCT.5.84	H.E. SANDERS LTD $92,197.60	JUL 84	FIN NOV 84 (V.SUN, OCT 6, 1984 E11	(HS, OCT. 10, 1984)

PROJ. NO.	LOCATION	AWARD DATE OR MONTH	CONTRACT-OR	BEGAN Note: often inaccurate +	DESCRIPTION	SOURCES/ EXTRA
C-2852	Coquihalla Highway Construction of Crossing No. 3 to Larson HILL, Coquihalla Highway (6.84 km)	AN. FEB.20.1985	EMIL ANDERS-ON $8.839m	JAN 85 xviii	SIX BRIDGE APPROACHES. INCLUDES SALMON REARING PONDS	Km 77.8 - km 84.6
C-2853	Construction of Ladner Creek to Shylock Landing, Coquihalla Highway (2.7 km)	JAN.15.85 (INQ)	E. LOBE CONTRA-CTING $9.268m	JAN 85 xix	GRADING ALONG A MOUNTAIN 'SIDE HILL' WHERE HIGHWAY ENTERS BOSTON BAR CREEK VALLEY, 1.0m m^3 OF WORK PDOC OCT.30.85	95% AT 31.3.86 MH NOV. 14, 1984, 1A
C-2854	Construction of Shylock Landing to Portia, Coquihalla Highway (2.5 km)	AN. JAN.28.85 (INQ) JAN.17.85	MILLER CONTRA-CTING $10.681m	JAN 85 xx	UP SIDEHILL IN BOSTON BAR CREEK VALLEY. PIPELINE RELOCATED. RETAINING WALLS AND AVALANCHE CONTROL WORK INCL. (T.COL. JAN 29, 1985, P 3) PDOC OCT.30.85	MH NOV. 14, 1984, 1A 95% AT MAR. 31. 86
C-2871	Construction of Hope to Nicolum Creek, Southern Trans-Provincial Highway 3 (8.37 km)	FEB.25.85 FEB.18.85(INQ)	GOODBR-AND $15.148 m		DIFFICULT GRADING AND PAVING WORK FOR 4-LANING SHOO-FLY/DETOUR BRIDGES REQUIRED. TWO BRIDGES INCLUDED. INTERCHANGES, RELOCATION OF A LOGGING ROAD & DIVERSION OF NICOLUM CREEK. (HS, FEB 27, 1985, P. 3.)	95% AT 31.3.86 HS, FEB 27, 1985, p.3) OTHELLO UNDERPASS NO. 2833 35 m SINGLE SPAN CONCRETE BOX GIRDER 18 m ROADWAY TWO MILE BRDG NO.. 1248 WIDENED

PROJ. NO.	LOCATION	AWARD DATE OR MONTH	CONTRACT-OR	BEGAN Note: often inaccurate +	DESCRIPTION	SOURCES/ EXTRA
C-2896	Provide power to Coquihalla Lakes, Great Bear Snowshed		Unclear if Day Labour or done by contractor		EXTENDING LINES FROM MERRITT TO PROVIDE ELECTRICITY FOR SUMMIT AMENITIES	
C-2906	Reconstruction Wahleach Power station - Cheam View Trans-Canada Highway (4.94 km)	JAN.29.85	EMIL ANDERSON $8.653M		EXCAVATION GRADING AND PAVING, BRIDGES, PIPELINE RELOCATIONS AND ROCK SLOPE STABILISATION INCL. 35 m 1-SPAN JONES HILL UNDERPASS no. 2851	90% AT 31.3.86 Westernmost TCH widening Jones Hill Underpass assumed to be incl
C-2907	Reconstruction - Cheam View-Jones Creek Trans-Canada Highway (5.73 km)	DEC.27.84	NU-ROAD $6.879m	JAN 85	CONTINUATION OF 2906 WITH 1.0m^3 OF EXCAVATION, INCL. GRADING AND PAVING, BRIDGES, S	80% AT 31.3.86
C-2944				NOV 84	MAR 85 - TOTE ROAD (DAY LABOUR?)	
C-3338	TOLL BOOTH PLAZA CONSTRUCTION	JUL.30.85	WILLIAM BROTHERS CONST. $1.140m			HS, AUGUST 14, 1985, P. 15

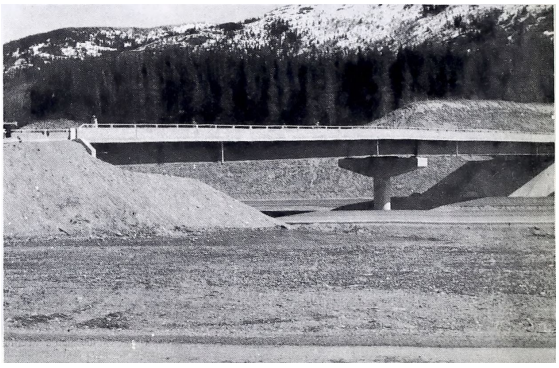
Phase I Grading 1984-85 + Hwy 1 & 3
(Bypass, Jones Creek, Hope - Nicolum
Table p-1-g

PROJ. NO.	LOCATION	AWARD DATE OR MONTH	CONTRACT-OR	BEGAN Note: often inaccurate +	DESCRIPTION	SOURCES/ EXTRA
C-2834	Construction of Coldwater Crossing No. 6 to Powerline Crossing, Coquihalla Highway (6.22 km)	AN. JAN.28.85 JAN.22.85 INQ	DAWSON $8.396m	JUL 85 x	(T.COL. JAN 29, 1985, P 3) SECTION TRANSITS TO EAST SIDE OF COLDWATER VALLEY TO APPROACH MERRITT 1.3m M^3 EXCAVATED (INCL 600,00 M^3 OF ROCK). CROSSES THE PIPELINE THRICE AND TWO MULTIPLATES PROJ DATE OF COMPLETION OCT.31.85	20% AT END 1984/ 85 Km 89.35 - km 95.6
C-2835 *C G*	Clearing and Grubbing, Powerline Crossing to Glenwalker, Coquihalla Highway	AN. OCT.5.84	S & G CONST $117,000	JUL 85*	FIN NOV 85* (V.SUN, OCT 6, 1984 E11) *ERROR	DONE NOV 85
C-2837	Construction of Trans Mountain Pipeline to junction of Highway 5A Coquihalla Highway (3.16 km)	DEC.11.84 (INQ)	VIEW CONST $1.9266m	NOV 84 xi	COMPLETES SOUTHERN APPROACH TO MERRITT WITH MAJOR MULTIPLATE PROJ DATE OF COMPLETION OCT.31.85	35% AT END 1985/ 84 Km 116.0-km 118.9
C-2838	Construction of Merritt Bypass, Coquihalla Highway (5.0 km)	AN. JAN.28.85 JAN.22.85	DELTA AGGREG-ATES $6.013m	JAN 85 xii	BYPASS OF MERRITT. THREE BRIDGES AND TWO MAJOR MULTIPLATES (T.COL. JAN 29, 1985, P 3) PROJ DATE OF COMPLETION OCT.31.85	25% AT END 1985/ 84
C-2839	Construction of Kwinshatin Creek to Trans Mountain Pipeline, Coquihalla Highway (6.3 km)	AN JAN.16.85 HUH JAN.7.85 (INQ)	LEDCOR $5.586m	JAN 85 xiii	OVER 1.5m M^3 OF EXCAVATION. TWO MAJOR MULTIPLATES PROJ DATE OF COMPLETION OCT.31.85	15% AT END 1985/ 84 MH, JAN 16, 1985, 10A

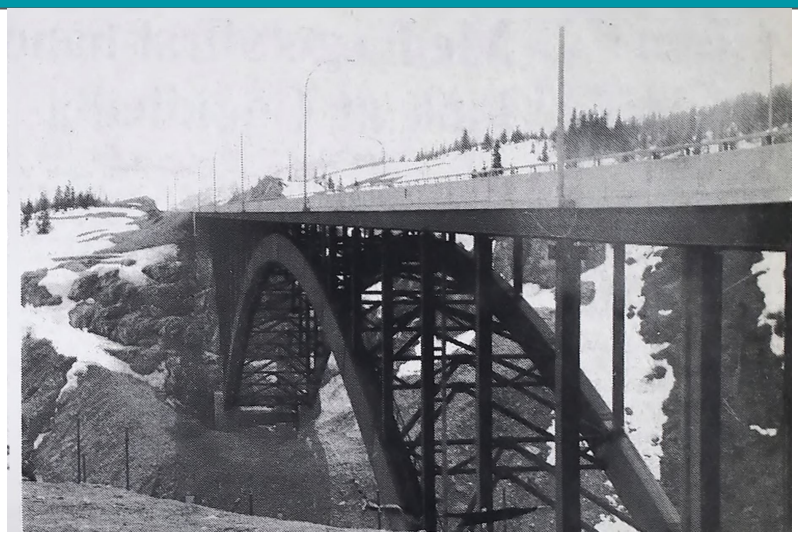
Highway 1 Fraser Valley Interchanges

Table t-fv-ic

Project No.	Location	Award Date	Began	Contractor & Bid Price		
C-2872	Whatcom Road Interchange w/ Hwy 1 w/ access road revision	2.Jan.86		Miller Contracting $3.562 m		Including underpass (CHWK Prog. Jan 22, 1986, p. 1) Ibe 54.7 m long Incl. 3-span concrete girder, 12.6 m roadway no 54.7 m 20% @31.3.86
C-2873	Popkum Interchange and Access Roads	2.Jan.86	Week of 13.Jan.86	Miller Contracting $4.776 m		Including access roads and Popkum Overpass, Anderson Creek Bridge # 2855 and widening of Anderson Creek Bridge #1538 (CHWK Prog. Jan 22, 1986, p. 1) Popkum Overpass 79.2 3-span concrete girder ; 20% @31.3.86
C-3016	Hunter Creek Interchange w/ Hwy 1	28.Jan.86		Emil Anderson $2.045 m		Including service roads and overpass and erection of three variable message signs. (CHWK Prog. Jan 22, 1986, p. 1) Two 31.3 m long overpasses, no. 2875. 30% @ 31.3.86



Coquihalla Lakes I/C
Credit: Merritt Herald/Nicola Valley Museum
MH, May 14, 1986



Dry Gulch Bridge
Credit: Merritt Herald/Nicola Valley Museum
MH, May 14, 1986

Coquihalla Phase I Bridge Contracts *Table t-p-1-b*

Project No	Bridge / Location	Awarded	Lengths	Contractor and Bid Price	
B-2787	Construction of Silverhope and Floods Underpasses, Trans Canada Highway	Nov.8.84	60 m, 2-span concrete stringer	Fast-Trac Const. $1.901 m	
B-2789	Construction of Nicolum Creek Bridge No. 2828, Coquihalla Highway	Jan.≈0.85	178 m 3-span continuous steel trapezoidal box-girder	Goodbrand $5,190,930	
B-2790	Construction of Tomberry Road Bridge No. 2618	An. early Dec.84	71 m, 3-span concrete bridge, one 45 m central span	River Const. $561,810.65	HS, Dec. 12, 1984, p. 13
B-2797	Construction of Jessica Bridge No. 2724, Coquihalla Highway	Dec.17.84	Twin 85.4 m long 3-span steel plate girder bridges	Kerkhoff $1,651 m	
2818	*Dry Gulch*				
B-2818-2	Dry Gulch Bridge No. 2827, Substructure	Oct.4.84 An. Oct.16.84	Build foundations	G.W. Carlson $827,749	The Leader (Ashcroft), Nov. 20, 1984, p. 12, AVT, Oct. 16, 1984, p .2
B-2818-3	Dry Gulch Bridge No. 2827, Superstructure	Nov.6.84	Construct 365 m long steel twin box girder arch bridge. Main span 175 m long and includes 8 steel side spans with steel tower bents. Deck 22 m wide.	Brittain Steel $6,784,029 (other firms that bid were Canron, Verigin Const & Dominion Bridge)	The Leader (Ashcroft), Nov. 20, 1984, p. 12
B-2826	Construction of Deneau Creek Bridge No. 2775, Coquihalla Highway	An. early Dec.84	36.4 m single span concrete girder	Kanish Const. $423,360.23	HS, Dec. 12, 1984, p. 3

Project No	Bridge / Location	Awarded	Lengths	Contractor and Bid Price	
B–2828	Construction of Hope Overpass and Thacker Creek Overpass, Coquihalla Highway	Jan.17.85	Hope: Twin 4-span concrete stringer bridges, being 146 m and 150 m Thacker Rd: twin 68 m 3-span concrete stringer	Kerkhoff $2.524 m	
B-2830	Construction of Portia Bridge No. 2835, Coquihalla Highway	Mar.7.85	122 m 4-span concrete girder bridge, 21.6 m deck	M.D.M. Enterprises $1.995 m	
B-2833	Construction of Alexander Creek Bridge No. 2849, Southern Trans-Provinc ial Highway 3	Mar.7.85	150 m 3-span steel girder bridge with two concrete end spans 11 m and 15 m long. 28.8 m roadway.	Goodbrand Const. $5.778 m	
B-2833	Construction of Dewdney Creek Bridge No. 2748, Coquihalla Highway	An. early Dec. 1984	35.5 m single span concrete girder bridge	Sefton Const $558,336.76	HS, Dec. 12, 1984, p. 3
B-2876	Construction of Ladner Creek Bridge No. 2853, Coquihalla Highway	Awarded Nov.30.84	260 m long 6-span steel girder w/ 5-twin column piers	Wesco Contracting $2,405,840 Extremely competitive bidding	

Project No	Bridge / Location	Awarded	Lengths	Contractor and Bid Price	
B-2879	Construction of Juliet Creek Bridge No. 2836 and Bottletop Bridge No. 2837, Coquihalla Highway	Feb.27.85	Juliet Creek: Two 87 m 3-span concrete girder bridges: Bottletop Twin 83 m 3-span concrete girder	Kerkhoff $3.166 m	
B-2880	Construction of Silverhope Creek Bridge No. 2577, Trans Canada Highway	Jan.30.85	220 m, 5-span steel girder	Kerkhoff $2.082	
B-2881	Construction of Henning Bridge No. 2830 and Coquihalla Lakes Underpass No. 2831, Coquihalla Highway	Nov.15.84	Coquihalla Lakes: 90 m two span continuous steel plate girder Henning: Two 45 m parallel 3-span concrete stringers	Kerkhoff $1.065 m	
B-2882	**Great Bear Snowshed** No. 2850	Jun.21.85 (Inq, p. 31)	6-lane, 280 m long c. 33 m wide snowshed. Concrete roof columns, side screens on a 600 m central radius.	Kerkhoff Const. $5,586,600.17 (alternative 1)	Awarded 1985/86
B-2884	Construction of Kingsvale Bridge No. 2841, Coquihalla Highway	Jan.30.85	78 m 3-span concrete girder span w/ 29 m wide deck	Kerkhoff $1.824 m	

Project No	Bridge / Location	Awarded	Lengths	Contractor and Bid Price	
B-2885	Construction of Kingsvale Overhead No. 2845, Coquihalla Highway	Mar.12.85	Twin 98 m 3-span concrete girder	Hallcraft Const. $2.309 m	
B-2886	Construction of Carolin Bridge No. 2767, Coquihalla Highway	Dec.20.84	71.8 m 2-span steel plate girder	Sefton Const. $1.614 m	
B-2937	Ottomite South Bridge No. 2852 & Ottomite North bridge No. 2884	Sep. 6.85	Two 95 m 3--span bridges, each 13.5 m wide. Cast of precast “internally prestressed post-tensioned box stringers” supported by concrete piers and abuments	Fas-Trac Const. $1,380,952.96	Awarded 1985/86
B-2939	Construction of Murray Bridge No. 2838, Brook Bridge No. 2839 and Brodie Bridge No. 2840, Coquihalla Highway	Jan.17.85	Murray Twin 68 m concrete girder; Brook 65 m 3-span concrete girder; Brodie Twin 73 m 3-span concrete girder	Belmont Const. $3.899 m	
B-3342	Shylock Road Underpass No. 2834, Coquihalla	An Aug- Sep. 1985	52 m 2-span steel girder bridge with 4.8 m wide deck	O.K. Construction $348,018.54	(HS. Sep. 25, 1985, p. 5)

Merritt Bypass C-2838 Bridges	Table t-mb-p-1-b	
Coldwater Underpass No. 2842 (97C)	98 m 2-span concrete girder	Constructed under C-2838 by DELTA AGGREG-ATES
Nicola River Bridge No. 2843	Twin 102-m 3-span concrete girder bridges	"
Underpass (5A-N) No. 2844	65 m 2-span concrete girder	"

Highway 8 Bridges

Table t-r8-b

Project No	Bridge / Location	Awarded	Lengths	Contractor and Bid Price	
B-2898	No. Curnow Bridge @mouth of Nicola River	An. week of Dec. 17, 1984	80 m 4-span concrete	Kenyon Const $617,537	MH, Dec. 19, 1984, 6A
B-2866	No. 6373 Three mile Bridge Hwy 8	Early Nov. 1984	100 m 3-span concrete	Theo Const. $613,761	MH, Nov. 14, 1984 p. 1A, 6A
B-0677	No. 0667 Rattlesnake	FY 1985/86	150 m 5-span concrete	Rone Contractors $1,359 M	Extremely low bid of $599,033.11 was made by Batoni Properties and not accepted

The Rattlesnake and Three-mile are connected by a convex piece of land that the river bends around. The highway simply goes over the river twice to avoid an unstable slope where it cannot sit.

All bridges were severely affected by the November 2021 flood. One of the abutments of the Curnow Bridge was left floating in air. A massive approach segment leading to the Rattlesnake bridge was erased. Three-mile suffered similar damage. Final completion of the recovery project is expected Spring of this year. Last year Google Street View and aerial imagery reveals that the piers of the preceding bridges were destroyed (manner not known)

Curnow was fixed by Cook's Ferry Alliance Team Limited Partnership
Rattlesnake and Three-Mile by MDBS Quattro Constructors Ltd. Work was finished Nov. & Sept. respectively.

"Highway 8 Information and Updates - November 2025." *B.C. MOTT,* November 2025 ed., https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/transportation-infrastructure-projects/2021-flood-road-recovery-projects/highway-8/newsletters/2025-11-28-highway-8-newsletter.pdf

"Highway 8 Information and Updates - Dec. 2025." *B.C. MOTT,* Dec. 2025 ed., https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/transportation-infrastructure-projects/2021-flood-road-recovery-projects/highway-8/newsletters/2025-12-highway-8-newsletter.pdf

Hwy 1 bridges - Floods-Whatcom included in contracts, info in grading tables

All bridges three bridges on Highway were designed by the Ministry, in contrast to the wholly consultant designed Coquihalla ones.
(Ann. Rpt. 1984/85, pp 196-197)

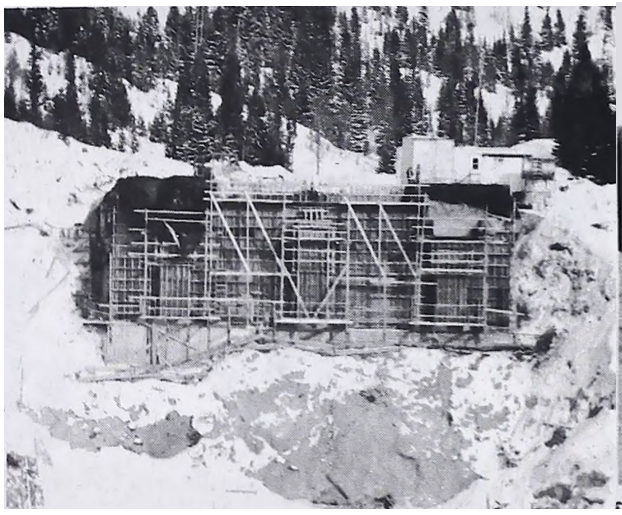
PHASE 2 Bridges listed separately, likely own contract

B-3565 Walloper
B-3606 Pacific Way Overpass
B-3639 Nicola Farm Bridge
B-3647 Copperhead Drive

Coquihalla Phase I Surfacing Contracts

t-p-1-p

Project No.	Location	Awarded	Contractor/Bid Price	Sources
S-2965	Nicolum Creek - Ladner Creek (20.15 km)	13.May.85 (An. 5.Jun.85)	Peter Bros. $1.259 m	MH, March 13, 1985 p 1. HS Jun 1985, p .5
S-2966	Ladner Creek-Great Bear No. 5 (15.26 km)	3.Sep.85 An 18.Sep.85	Columbia Bitulithic $1.429 m	Alberni Valley Times Oct 1, 1985,p. 3, Chwk Prog. Oct 9, 1985, p.29
S-2967	Great Bear No. 5 - Murray Bridge (31.61 km)	8.Jul.85 An. 24.Jul.85	Dawson Construction $1.876 m	MH, July 24, 1985, 1a
S-2968	Murray Bridge - Glenwalker (29.07 km)	8.Jul.85 An. 24.Jul.85	Emil Anderson $1.858 m	MH, July 24, 1985, 1a
S-2969	Glenwalker - Nicola Interchange (5A -N) (17.98 km)	31.Jul.85 (Inq)	Peter Bros. $1.121 m	



(L) Drug Gulch Bridge abutment
(R)Section primed for pavement, c. July? 1985
(MH, May, 14, 1986) Credit: Merritt Herald/Nicola Valley Museum

Insights from Traffic Data

While it will not be spoken about in-depth herein, the Fraser Canyon was deeply affected by the Coquihalla. There is no doubt about it.

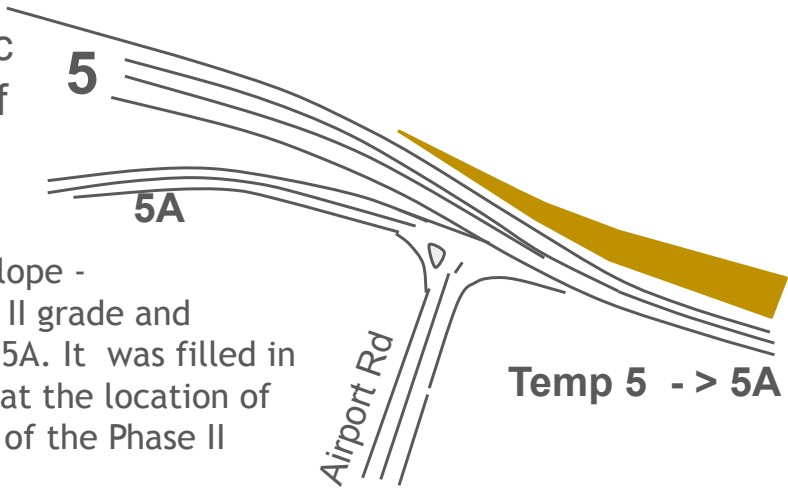
During 1985 & 1986, the Trans-Canada Highway between Hope and Chilliwack was often closed for blasting and pipeline relocation on the two. Because of that, traffic used Route 7.

Traffic on highway 1 in the Canyon decreased after Phase I opened.

Until the opening of Phase 2, Highway 5A north to Kamloops was slammed with traffic. A direct link was built to transition traffic onto the Merritt-Kamloops highway. It went from ~1000/day to 6000/day in summer.

In 1990, traffic which previously used Highway 3 to get to Kelowna also started to use the Okanagan Connector, decreasing traffic in a similar fashion the canyon. Traffic volumes for Highway 5 also jumped upwards at the same time.

The stats on the following pages are from MOTH Average Summer Traffic Volumes. They cover July and August of their select years, not the whole year.



Highway 5 - 5A direct link. Brown is an earthen cut slope - the link was not on the same level of the final Phase II grade and needed to be lower that it to smoothly connect into 5A. It was filled in when Phase II was completed This is obvious looking at the location of the Phase I lanes in this diagram. Other (level) parts of the Phase II grade are not coloured or show.

Traffic Volumes

Hwy 1 P27-1NS 300 m north of China Bar Tunnel North Portal
8436 (1985) LOOP
5226 (1986) *clear decrease*
4649
4939 (1987)
5184 (1989)
5099
5170 (1991)
5282
5291(1993)
(TV, 1985-88, p. 9) (TV, 1989-93, p. 3)

28-6 500 m north of route #8 at Spences bridge (TUBE)
7500 (1985)
4600 (1986) *clear decrease*
4400
4700 (1988)
4800
4600
4700 (1991)
5200 (1993)
ibid.

Data for 21-9EW (Savona Bridge seems skewed due to intermittent usage of a loop and tube count).

27-22EW Hwy 3 at Two Mile/ Alexander Creek bridge LOOP

7200 (1985)
N.r (1986)
13,300 (1987) LOOP *clear increase*
14,400 (1988)
14,400 (1989)
15,700
16,200 (1991)
n.r
18,500 (1993) (
TVol 1985-88, p 26)
(TVol. 1987-93, p 27)

27-28NS Hwy 5 500 m south of Coldwater interchange (type n.k.) added
Not established (1985)
6,500 (1986)
6600
8800 (1988)
n.r
n.r
n.r(1991)
12,700 (1992) LOOP
(Tvol, 1985-88, p. 28)
(TVol, 1989-93 p. 30)

21-22NS HWY 5 700 m South of Afton I/C added
Not established (1985-1987)
9100 (Tube?) 1988
n.r. (1989)
9400 (1990)
8900
9800 (1992)
Made into P-21-3: 9795 (1993)
(Tool, 1985-88, p. 26)
(TVol, 1989-93 p. 28)

P-27-2NS Hwy 5 Dry Gulch Bridge added
Not established (1985)
6460 (1986) TUBE
6014 LOOP from here
7113 1988)
8301 (1989)
8239
11530 (1991)
11451
12558 (1993)
(TVol 1985-88, p 26)
(TVol. 1987-93, p 27)

Did you know? Lighting for the Great Bear Snowshed cost $947,117 (E-2925). It's unclear if that was included in the Datafile 'A' cost cited earlier herein. (Brief, Appendix to August 29. 1987)

27-34NS Hwy 5A & 97C 500m south of Coldwater I/C
Not established (1985)
1300 (1986) TUBE
1300 TUBE
1300 (1988) TUBE
1500 (1989) TUBE
1700 (1990) LOOP
6300 1991) LOOP
5500 (1992)
Replaced by two for 1993
27-42EW 5A/97C west of Aspen Grove Jct 6400 (1993)
27-41EW 97C east of Aspen Grove Jct 5900 (1993)

27-16NS Hwy 5A 200 m south of Reynold Rd btw Nicola and Stump Lakes added
1500 (1985
6600 (1986)
6400 (1987)
880 (1988)
Levels out at about 1100 after

(TVol 1985-88, p 28)
(TVol. 1989-93, p 30)

P-17-3 EW Hwy 7 500 east of Haig Scale (LOOP)
6471 (1985)
3168 (1986) *clear decrease*
2640
2754 (1988)
2935
3066
3166 (1991)
3294
3648 (1993)

(TVol 1985-88, p 28)
(TVol. 1989-93, p 34)

P17-1EW (just south of McKay Rd in Laidlaw west of Hope (LOOP)
Beginning at 1983
c. 11900 (1983)
12,220 (1984)
10,801 (1985)
16,508 (1986)
17,965 (1987)
17,809 (1988)
19,703
20,146 (1990)
21428 (1991)
21,825
23,609 (1993)

(Tvol., 1983-86, p. 10)
(Tvol, 1985-88, p. 9)
(Tvol, 1989-93 p. 9)

The May long weekend of 1986 saw the traffic decrease pattern emerge. Business interests from Cache Creek and Ashcroft met to strategize on May 28. They thought more signage would be needed. They recognized the need to adapt, the need for promotion, advertising the area as a destination Ashcroft Journal, Jun. 3, 1986, pp. 1, 3.

Clearly, although the had not been route 66'd - they were perhaps, ***route 22'd.***

1985 to Hwy 3 at yard east of Allison Pass P26-1EW
6228 LOOP
6465 LOOP (1986)
6116 LOOP
6183 (1988)
6527
6756 (1990)
4779(1991) *decrease*
4816
5002 (1993)

(TVol 1985-88, p 28)
(TVol. 1989-93, p 30)

26-17EW 3.2 km east of bridge at Hedley (tube)
6300 (1985) TUBE
6900 (1986) TUBE
6400 TUBE
6500 (1988) TUBE
7700 (1989)
7000 (1990)
4900 (1991) *decrease*
5700
6500(1993)

(85-88, p. 17) 89-983, p. 19)

26-5 EW 3A 800 m east of Route 3 Jct. (tube)
4400 (1986)
4100
4000 (1988)
4300
3900 (1990)
3000 (1991)
3100
3500 (1993)

(85-88, p. 17)
(86-90, p. 23)
(89-93, p. 21)

Epilogue

Changes

Son of Zalm & death to Open Bid

One of Bill Vander Zalm's legacies is his love of privatisation. The best laid plans of Zalm and man were set on privatising Provincial Road Maintenance.
(Canadian Press. Nanaimo Daily News, Nov. 30, 1987, p. 12)
(Canadian Press. Nanaimo Daily News, Dec. 11, 1987, p. 1)
(CHWK Prog. Oct. 12, 1988, C2)

Before 1988, regional road crews conducted maintenance and operation duties on MOTH responsible roads.

The current and former Ministry staff, including Alex Fraser and R.G. Harvey detested the idea. Initially that included Al Rhodes (who retired in 1985) and Norm Zapf, two bigwigs in the MOTH.

(VSun, Dec. 1, 1987, A2)
(Williams Lake Tribune, December 1, 1987, p. 10.)+

In January 1988 Al Rhodes and Norm Zapf, had acted to form a maintenance company in association with the BCGEU. Both served as board members of this new venture, temporarily called 336663 BC Ltd.

They looked to get highways maintenance workers on-board to win rights for a province-wide maintenance contract.
(Vsun, Jan 15, 1988, E6).
The BCGEU revealed their idea in December 1987, but Vander Zalm struck them down around January 20. He would split the province into 28 contract regions.
(T.Col, Jan 22, 1988, p. 1.)
(Eagle Valley News, Jan. 27, 1988, p. 2)

Aside from privatising highway maintenance, the Vander Zalm Government completely reorganized the Ministry. Much of this was done in-cooperation with the Coquihalla Commission's Recommendations

The 1988/89 MOTH annual report gives a list of the new:
More responsibility to highways, regions & districts. Achieved by
'Decentralizing':
Planning, project design engineering, construction management, property acquisition and of course maintenance. Design and planning went to the wayside hands of consultants.

They said these changes would strengthen public consultations, make the Ministry a better, more active member of the community and "create a better framework for public consultation".
Employment roles were restructured, with 600 people being hired according to the Ministry
Further, a computer management system for finances was procured; an internal audit department was set up and began auditing; the appointment of the role of project managers to oversee capital projects.

During Phase I's construction, the Ministry used a system called "FMIS" (FInancial Management Information System), whereby a monthly progress estimate was submitted by the supervisor for a particular contract.
(Brief, p. 12)
The Ministry also began creating a provincial transportation plan and set-up a "Transportation Council".

Much of these changes came in-response to the McKay inquiry. In-fact, it is certainly possible that the inquiry just created an explanation/excuse/reason for reorganization.

Clearly, a new way of doing things and been decided on.

The old Ministry men and women who worked maintenance were offered places in the new companies. According to the Ministry, of the 2449 affected employees (almost 90%') numbering 2187 chose to stay on. 10 of the 28 maintenance companies were formed by previous government maintenance workers. For the remaining 262 - 100 found new positions in the Ministry, retired or resigned. It appears by the end of FY 1988/89 100 workers had not yet resolved a new status Ann Rpt. 1987/88, pp. 12-15). (Ann Rpt 1988/89 pp. 19-20)

The final maintenance contract became effective April 1, 1989, spelling the gravestone of government road maintenance on provincial roads.

Vander Zalm did not stop here. The biggest change was the removal of opening bidding. On June 29, 1988, the Miscellaneous Amendments Act no. 1, SBC 1988.c. 45 passed. It amended S 49 of the Ministry of Transportation and Highways Act, R.S.B.C. 1979, c. 280.

It added/substituted two of the following passages: "where the Minister determines that an alternative contracting process will result in competitively established costs for the performance of such work"

"The Minister or a person designated by the Minister shall make available to the public, on request, the value "

Former Deputy Minister R.G. Harvey laments this as being the death of open bidding in British Columbian highway procurement. Open bidding is the practice of opening a tender to basically anyone without observation or pre qualifying them. Harvey even referred to it as *"[W.A.C] Bennett's cherished concept"*.

Mitchell, David J. "W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia/" p. 182.
(Rothenberger, Mel. Friend o' Mine pp. 127-129)

A quote from a Canadian Press report talking about Phil Gaglardi just before the September 1956 provincial elections tells:. "We tossed out the Liberals' *restrictive bidding practices when we took office...where we used to get an average of two bids per contract, we get four or six." This stance is backed up by Harvey, in C.C.
Nanaimo Daily Free Press, Sept. 15, 1956, p. 20.

Bennett was paraphrased in 1961 commentating that *"there were no "select groups; highways contracts were open to big and small firms alike,"*

Three years later, after a bad contract caused a probe of a highways project at Kays Falls between Sicamous and Revelstoke on Highway 1, Liberal Leader Ray Perrault called for a system of tender prequalification.
(VSun, May 12, 1964, p, 13)

Three-and-a-half years earlier, a resolution for prequalification in highway contracts was presented at the Social Credit League (party) of Nov. 1960. Gaglardi explained: *"We call for a bond [from the contractor] anytime we wish, and if the contractor is unable to get it we can cancel the contract."* This resolution came after a contractor failed to complete a job and had an insufficient bond to cover. (Prov, Nov. 5, 1960, p. 3.)

The number of bidders on a project could be very high.

the number of contractors who bid for the Great Bear Snowshed was *twelve*. On the Annacis system project, the 84 Avenue (Nordel Way) BNSF Overhead in Surrey had *17* different bidders!

The inquiry was critical of bidding in the regard that they saw the bidding process as a simple means to select a contractor. Massive alterations and revisions in the contracts and the work specified therein happened a lot during the Coquihalla's construction.

**the B.C. Liberals had been in coalition with the B.C. Conservatives but that broke-up in January 1952. The Liberals remained the government until Bennett won the 1952 election and formed Gov't.*

The Coquihalla spurred the death of the open bidding system - and furthermore probably heralded the:

.The Death of Transparency ....

Vaughn Palmer is a man who's been at it for a long time. He's the senior columnist for the Vancouver Sun, where he has been since 1973 - basically as long as *Dark Side of the Moon* has. . For all we know he's written more words than Tolkien did in Lord of the Rings.

Here at *Heaven Knows*, we've had a grievance for years. You see, information that we learn, discover, uncover and report on has actually become harder to get. Older information is easier to obtain re: the Ministry. That is because the Ministry used to produce some fantastic material that has been culled.

In the years of research and learning (training even) one of the best tools for researching our provincial road system are the Ministry's *Annual Reports.*

From, more or less, 1874 to 1985 with every session of the legislature, annual reports would be created by each department or Ministry.

They were huge, informative, mostly comprehensive and a great index to begin research.

Across that time, all of the departments, ,ministries and even the office of the Chief of Lands and Works published 100+ or up to 300+ ....

page annual reports
By the Coquihalla,
110 years of reports had been published.
Then, came the neutered ones, because after the Coquihalla scandal the page count was cut to 1/5th the size!

The report for FY 1985-86 was the last time that a mammoth report was published. Those 400 pages were cut right down. For 1986-87. The juicy salivating, excellent information was gutted. Monetary and highlights were all that was left. Contracts awarded, day labour, branch reports, district reports, and surveys were all gone from the report.

Who noticed at the time? Vaughn Palmer. 37 years ago, he saw the same injustice this magazine deals with today.

When the NDP took power in 1991 the quality improved, but around Glen Clark's tenure they were again made lamer. In c. 2002 the title was changed to Annual Service Report. These are functionally very useless now. They have a pinch of information, and that's it.

Now they issue pitiful annual service reports that tell you nothing useful in chronicling.

A great injustice - and Vaughn - thank you for noticing all those years ago. He (you) seemed to be quite infatuated with writing about it!

Mackie John. "Vaughn Palmer celebrates 50 years at The Vancouver Sun." *Vancouver Sun,* April 14, 2023

Speed Limits

When both Phase I and Phase II opened, they both had 100 km/h speed limits.

Effective November 2 ,1987, the limit would be raised to 110 km/h for the whole length between Othello(ish) to Afton/Kamloops. Four of the curves near Hope remained at 100 km/h.

This came after police had issued 100 tickets in the first week of the opening of Phase II, causing public dissatisfaction.

The decision to raise the limit was being contemplated in August,just before Phase II's open.

(Vsun, Aug. 29, 1987, A8)

The TNRD had asked the Minister to raise the limit on Sept. 17, 1987. The Ministry took consideration of it.

The decision had been made by October 17, 1987 to raise the limit (Vsun, Oct. 17, 1987, A2) Engineers were reported to have been consulted. Minister Cliff Michael announced it the week of Oct. 19.

The Okanagan Connector opened with speed limit of 110 km/h

As we all know, that was increased to 120 km/h on July 1, 2014, and today the Coq is one of two highways in the country with that speed posted. The other 120 km/h section is a pilot test is currently being conducted on a 22 km portion of Alberta Highway 2.

(Ashcroft Journal, Nov. 3, 1987, p. 1)

(CHWK Prog., Oct. 21, 1987, p. 6)

(MH, Oct. 21, 1987, p. 1A)

(NDN, Sep. 11, 1987, p. 11)

(

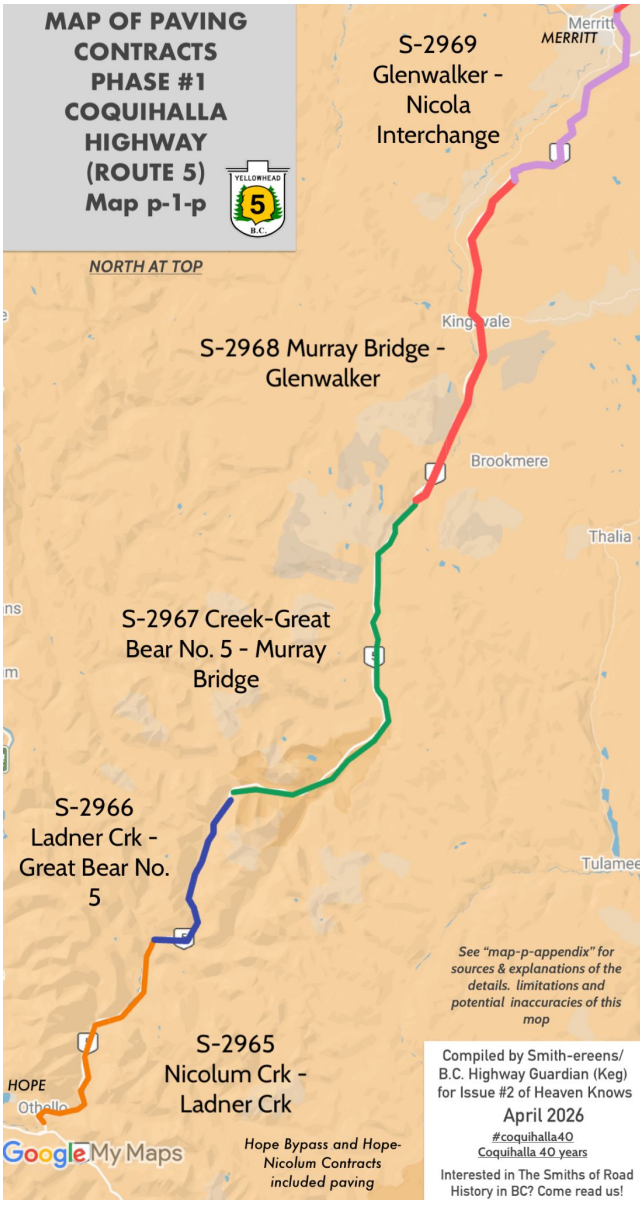
An Outstanding Woman: Hats off to Angela Abrams

In *20 Months Through the Mountains*, there is a Scene where an boardroom meeting is taking place. There's a meeting where it's all men except for one woman. *Heaven Knows'* staff have wondered who the lone woman in the room is for years.

Incredibly, happenstance led us to finding out she is Angela Abrams, who stepped into the role of 'Assistant Environmental Coordinator' at the MOTH in 1980. In that role she directly helped in the Coquihalla environmental program that assisted the fish, ensured environmental security safely diverted the Coquihalla and Coldwater numerous times.

Direct evidence was found that she also assisted with wildlife exclusion system design. The depth of her involvement in it has not been ascertained at a cursory look.

She has played a role in opening up road related careers to women, even if she was just there doing her job.


MAP OF PAVING CONTRACTS PHASE #1 COQUIHALLA HIGHWAY (ROUTE 5) Map p-1-p
NORTH AT TOP
S-2969 Glenwalker - Nicola Interchange
S-2968 Murray Bridge - Glenwalker
S-2967 Creek-Great Bear No. 5 - Murray Bridge
S-2966 Ladner Crk - Great Bear No. 5
S-2965 Nicolum Crk - Ladner Crk
MERRITT
Brookmere
Thalia
Tulameen
HOPE
Othello
Google My Maps
Hope Bypass and Hope-Nicolum Contracts included paving
See "map-p-appendix" for sources & explanations of the details. limitations and potential inaccuracies of this mop
Compiled by Smith-ereens/ B.C. Highway Guardian (Keg) for Issue #2 of Heaven Knows April 2026
#coquihalla40
Coquihalla 40 years
Interested in The Smiths of Road History in BC? Come read us!

Map of Phase I surfacing contracts p-1-p

COQUIHALLA COSTS

The Coquihalla is known for having gone over budget. But what were the final costs?
Throughout the construction, $375 million was the cost for Phases 1 & 2. Phase 1 specifically was said to cost $250 million. These estimates originated in the 1970s at the projects conception.
The McKay commission focused on these numbers as its inquest mantra.

The sources used in the figures concluded upon in this (non-official) publication are as follows:
-Unless otherwise noted: McKay's Commissioner's Report, pp. ix, 21.
-For Phase III and Phase III Ministerial Annual Reports from 1986/87 - 1992/93

McKay's Phase II & III figures are:

II **$155,485,477** (incl. $20 mil estimate to completion)

III $268,734,853 (incl. $230 mil estimate to completion)

Rationale to use the Ministry's approved and unaudited Figures explained:
-Phase II rationale is that McKay underestimated costs.

-Phase III the McKay's figure for the Connector were millions above the unaudited total and it's reasonable to believe he highballed the figure. *Although the Ministry was in a position of unreliability given the cost overruns,the outlined factors mean their (post-commission) figures are reliable for our purposes*

HEAVEN KNOWS COQUIHALLA SYSTEM COSTS REPORT

Main Phases 1, 2 & 3 (McKay,p.20; Annual Reports)

- Phase 1 Hope - Merritt* - - **$414,718,454** (to September 1987)
- Phase 2 Merritt - Kamloops - **$159,825,471** (to March 31, 1988)
- Phase 3 Okanagan Connector **$231,754,478** (to March 31, 1992
  - Phase 3 Residual FY 1992/93 $**83,599** (to March 31, 1993) add later
  - *(alternate Phase 3 figure + - $227,753,000 not used here, retroactively lowered*
- Unclassified - - - - $4,877,840
- Remedial Work - - - $4,030,000

(possibilities of missing Phase II/III monies not factored)

PHASE 1& 2 COQUIHALLA HWY PROPER TOTAL: $574,543,925

PHASES 1,2 & 3 TOTAL *$815,206,243* ($231 mil assumed)

Alternatively w/$227.753 m figure = $811,204,765

incl $83,599 amount w/ $231 m = $815,289,842

Alt'ly incl. $83,599 amount w/$227.753 figure $811,288,364

Other costs Coquihalla System

- Highway #1 Lower Mainland - Widening and Interchanges $97,192,005
- Ancillary Projects † - - - $53,396,138

TOTAL Associated Projects ***$150,588,143***

OUR TOTAL SYSTEM COST (incl Phase III highball) ***$965,794,386***

From last page

($231 million figure assumed)

WITH $83,599 ADDED = $965,877,985

ADJUSTED ASSUMING $227.753 mil = $961,792,908

ADJUSTED ASSUMING $227.753 mil + $83,599 = $961,876,507

McKAY

McKAY'S COQUIHALLA SYSTEM TOTAL: *$998,434,737 (McKAY)*

McKAY'S PHASES 1, 2 & 3 TOTAL $847,846,594 (*McKAY*)

McKAY WITH:

WITH ONLY PHASE II REMOVED $842,949,260

WITH ONLY PHASE III REMOVED *$729,699,884*
Above two include ancillary

McKAY
PHASES II & III REMOVED
USED IN THIS PUBLICATION'S
FINAL COSTS ASSESSMENT) (SEE NOTE) $574,214,407

*Starting at Nicolum Creek. The consideration of funds had been adjusted to there from Hope.
† Works on Highways #3 and #8; current Highways #5A, # 97C (Highland Valley Rd) & #97D.
♠The Province later gave a figure of $225 million as the cost of the Okanagan Connector.

McKay's estimate for Phase III appeared to exceed the commonly stated cost of $225 million (emphasised in 1987 dollars). His estimate for phase III has been subtracted from the total. The $20 million completion estimate for phase II remains included here.
The figure or the Connector varied in research. It is not concrete, and further investigation. The $231 million figure was said to be in nominal dollars and include employee benefits

Canadian Dollars today

Phase I $1,069,705,226.50 1986)

ii$396,367,168.08 (1987)

iii$500,589,672.48 (1990)

Tch 250,692,475.15 (1986)

Ancillary $137,727,480.76 (1986)

Unclassified & remedial $22,976,462.50 (1986)

Today 2.37805849*10^9

$2,378,058,490 or thereabouts

Okanagan Connector (Phase III) Costs

The amount of nearly $269 million McKay reached consisted mostly of an estimated total. Obviously, the Connector was nowhere near completion in September 1987.

In the press and from the MOTH's mouth, the project cost $225 million

Vernon Morning Star, Oct 03, 1990, pp. 1, 3. Vsun, Oct 2, 1990, B1, B3, Prov. Oct 2, 1990,

Costing $225 million (Nanaimo Daily News, Oct 01, 1990 ·Page 2 Prov. Oct 2, 1990,)

Within budget Vsun, Oct 2, 1990

On budget (prov, Oct, 2, 1990

Within 1987 valued budget of $225 million MOTH Ann. Rpt. 1990-91 p, 38, 39 ; Vsun, ibid.

However, in the MOTH Annual Reports for FY 1991-92 and 1992-93, the following cumulative total expenditures up to the end of their year. Note that the figures are unaudited

(Listed to the nearest thousandth)

-TO March 31, *1993* (p. 40) total amounted to $227.837 million

-TO March 31, *1992* (p. 42) total amounted to $227.753 million

Each spent each yeaR

BEFORE and not including 1990-91 - $186,463,511 (1990/91 pp. 17, [26?])
$43,856,800 in FY 1990-91 ibid.
$1,434,167) n FY 1991-1992 (1991/92, pp. 39, 42.)
$83,599 FY 1992-1993 (1992/93, p. n.k.)

Unfortunately, when the figures here (excluding $83,599) are not consistent with the totals provided in the 1992/93 report reported as expended for that FY and the year prior.

The higher figure given is $231,754,478

20 Months? Is it true?

Plainly stated, things are not clear cut.

For example, the 1984/85 annual report details the reconstruction of the tote road up the river as beginning in April 1984. If correct, would that count as being the start of the clock?
(Ann. Rpt. 1984/85) p. 161; lists 18.0 km of work)

How can we know what counts as starting the clock?
Is cutting a tree the start? A digger, a shovel in the earth? Does have it carried out by a contractor or does the Ministry's work count too? For practical purposes, we can assume Ministry workers were on-site in May doing some form of work. Emil Anderson was given the first accelerated contract on June 14, 1984. Since they were based in Hope. they would be on-site in quick time.

First grading contract award Dec. 20, 1978 to May 16, 1986

88 months 26 days
(7y 4mos 26 d / 386 weeks 2 days / 2704 days

First (Coquihalla Proper) post-April
Ladysmith/Cedar Pt private
Fast-tracking decision to May 16, 1986
Decision could've been made any day - assume Sunday, April 29, 1984 and **Monday April 30, 1984** to May 16, 1986 (end of retreat/**first working day italics)**

24 months, 17 days
(2y 17d)
24 months, 16 days
(2y 16d)

June Revival contract (assume June 14, 1984)

23 months, 2 days (1 y11mos, 2d/ 100 weeks & 1d / 701 days

July (#2) grading contract awarded on July 11, 1984 revival to May 16, 1986

22 months 5 days (1y10mos,5d / 96 Weeks, 2d / 674 days

Public announcement
of fast-tracking to September 26, 1984
To May 16, 1986
19 months 20 days (1y 7mos, 20d / 19 mos, 20 d / 597 days)

Fun fact: this magazine, like the Coquihalla, was rushed to completion, and contains several dozen errors that will need fixing/ We're dedicated to the historical method here at Heaven Knows. We also appreciate our readers - so thank you!

TUNNEL THE LEAST,
ROCK CUTS THE MOST,
EVERYTHING LEADS TO HOPE -
GOT A BRIDGE? JUST FILL 'ER IN
CURVERT HERE, THERE, EVERYWHERE!
ALL 'ROUND F-SHAPELAND.

Wildlife Fencing

The Phase I of Coquihalla had no active protection against wildlife intrusions when built. Wildlife reflectors* were installed close to the summit later on These were put in place after a large deer casualties occured (explained below). These did not work and led the ministry to adopt wildlife exclusion system fencing as a proactive prevention method. They first implemented it on parts of Phase II and to the fully with it for Phase III.

The goal of such a system prevent animals from intruding onto the right-of-way to prevent wildlife collisions. This is achieved using fencing, cattleguards and providing animals opportunities to pass under (or occassionally over the road). Fencing is about 2.40 m to 2.50 m tall. One way gates are provided so any animal trapped within the fencing system can escape into safe territory.

The previously trialled method of providing protection against collisions is by using roadside wildlife reflectors. These are placed on posts 10 metres apart and form a band of light when cars' headlights shine on them, theoretically spooking & preventing the animal from crossing into traffic when light reflects. They are now considered to be ineffective. The MOTT no longer installs them and policy dictates existing systems be phased out. (KTW, Sept. 1, 1993, p. 36) B.C. MOTI. T-01/14 Re: Wildlife Reflectors, Jan. 29, 2014. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/driving-and-transportation/transportation-infrastructure/engineering-standards-and-guidelines/technical-circulars/2014/t01-14.pdf)

Brennan L, Chow E, Lamb C. 2022. Wildlife overpass structure size, distribution, effectiveness, and adherence to expert design recommendations. *PeerJ* 10:e14371 https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.14371 (associated w/ y2y).

Current observations of Phase I seem to show there's fencing from Dry Gulch Bridge to the Veale Road multiplate underpass. Fencing for Dry Gulch Bridge to Brodie was tendered in 1993, with Valley Blacktop Ltd. winning with a $445,323 bid. (KTW, Sept. 1, 1993, p. 36) This either fully or partially replaced c. 2200 wildlife reflectors placed in FY 1987/88. (Ann. Rpt 1987/88, p. 43)

Deer, underpass & fencing Sep. 2000

Wildlife Exclusion System by BC MOTT
CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

The exclusion system was extended when the substandard shorter pre-existing fences between Brodie and Kingsvale Bridge were upgraded to wildlife exclusion fencing in 1996. This work was awarded to Gene Moes Const for $332,000. It cluded 31 one-way gates. (Tender, MH, Jul. 10, 1996, p. 31) (HS, August 29, 1996, p. 10).

The section of road between the Kane Valley Rd under-culvert to Rusty Pit (49.97414, -120.90930) was fenced in Fall 2017 (MOTI, News Release, August 18, 2017, https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2017TRAN0221-001451). It's unclear when the preceding Kingsvale Bridge-Kane Valley Rd section was completed. The Phase I network reached its present length in 2020. This work was to be undertaken by Progressive Fence Installations in a $1.2 million contract.

(Global News, June 20, 2020, https://globalnews.ca/news/7089539/coquihalla-highway-wildlife-fencing/)
(Penticton Herald, June 26, 2020 https://globalnews.ca/news/7089539/coquihalla-highway-wildlife-fencing/)

The MOTT maintains something called the "Wildlife Accident Reporting System' which tracks the number of recorded animal collisions in B.C. Maintenance contractors primarily record these incidents. After the 1993 when fencing was introduced - the period from 1994-1998 saw zero recorded collisions. 1989-1993 saw 74. Do note that it's very likely a good percentage of collisions are never reported to the Ministry. (Sielecki (2005), p. 85)

On the Okanagan Connector, no collisions were recorded from 1990-1998. (Sielecki (2005), p. 89). These systems work and save both wildlife and human suffering.

Slaughter Alley

On Phase I, there were a couple of deer and moose had been in the summit area that were spotted by in winter by wildlife crews prior to the opening and/or construction. However, biologists and crews had failed to anticipate a gathering pattern of deer around the toll booth area in summer. During summer 1986, something terrible happened. According to biologist Sandy McDonald "we [MOTH etc.] were a little bit wrong." (Hume, 1987)

Dr. Leonard Sielecki (Sielecki, 2005, p.85) added that further carnage occurred when the Fall breeding season happe ned.

About 30 deer died because of the failure to recognize their movements. On Phase II, the MOTH had also began to monitor animal movements to determine patterns.

Probably starting in Winter 1984-85, the Ministry began using telemetry receivers to track wildlife along the corridor. Up to FY 1985/86 end, 11 moose, six deer and five bears were tracked. From that point, the observations were to continue for another year (Ann. Rpt 1985/86, p. 225)

Up-to near Phase II's opening, they had recorded c. 39,000 crossings just for moose. Fortunately, they had learned their lesson on Phase I and took more focus on wildlife. Tht included fencing. (Hume, 1987)

The ensuring of provisions for wildlife on Highway 97C was urged by the B.C. Wildlife Federation. They had raised concerns to both the province and media before Phase I had even opened. (VSun, April 14, 1986, A7). The fencing and crossing methods used on Phase II were used on Phase III.

Hume Mark, Experts Trying to Avoid a Repeat of Phase-one Coquihalla Road Kill." *Vancouver Sun,* August 18, 1987, p. 1, 3 (other editions have it on different pages)

MOTH. News Release. August 22, 2000, File #82696. Via Wayback Machine. https://web.archive.org/web/20010501205813/http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/bchighways/nr_2000/82696.htm

MOTH. News Release. Sept. 14, 2000, File #83042. Via Wayback Machine. https://web.archive.org/web/20010501203943/http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/bchighways/nr_2000/83042.htm
Hume, Math

Sielecki,
Leonard E. "The Evolution of Wildlife Exclusion Systems on Highways in British Columbia. International Conference on Ecology and Transportation Paper, 2007. https://escholarship.org/content/qt50s874mq/qt50s874mq_noSplash_3290c55fd275f60a429bb5b7abc3a9a1.pdf

Sielecki,
Leonard E. "The Evolution of Wildlife Exclusion Systems For Accident Mitigation on British Columbia Highways." UC Davis, Aug. 2, 2005. IMC9 Symposium No. 14: Wildlife Animals & Traffic Accidents 2005.

(Yellowstone to Yukon, "{When it Comes to Wildlife Crossings, Does Size Matter?" *y2y.net*, https://y2y.net/blog/when-it-comes-to-wildlife-crossings-does-size-matter)

(Yellowstone to Yukon, "How do Wildlife Know to Use Animal Bridges and Crossings?" *y2y.net*, May 15, 2024. https://y2y.net/blog/how-do-wildlife-know-to-use-animal-bridges/

to be continued....

Andy Rourke - three years gone

There isn't another bass player like Andy Rourke. He's the reason why this zine is supposed to be about the Smiths, because he's how the proprietor's got into the Smiths. In-fact, it's changed the way *they* plays and understands the bass guitar.

Andy endured many hardships in-life. A suddenly absent mother, drug addiction, later on the death of a brother and financial woes. Nonetheless, he strove to share his skill and music with us.

"When he died, I was quite affected despite never listening to the Smiths. In-fact, I think he was the first member whose name I learned. I'd heard the Morrissey name, but didn't know he was in the band. It's so strange that his death hit me like that, but I didn't come to understand his playing and the Smiths themselves a year later." - Keg, Proprietor of Heaven Knows

When people try to downplay Andy, the best thing you can say is "could you play that?" If they aren't a bassist, then their opinion is without merit. They might have an opinion based on how it sounds to them, but no one can deny that his playing just sounds good. The same goes for Mike too, though Andy certainly remains a diamond in the rough amongst bass players for his particular melodic and uptuned p*laying*.

Rest in peace Andy, we miss you

X

Some interesting factoids

Only core-four member who had a non-Irish parent

Loved Neil Young (how he connected with Marr)

One of four brothers

He laid down two bass lines on both "Pretty Girls Make Graves" and the single/debut vrs. of "What Difference Does it Make?"

He played a Fender VI on "Death on One's Elbow."

His childhood home is still standing and has been modified since his family left it (40+ years ago)

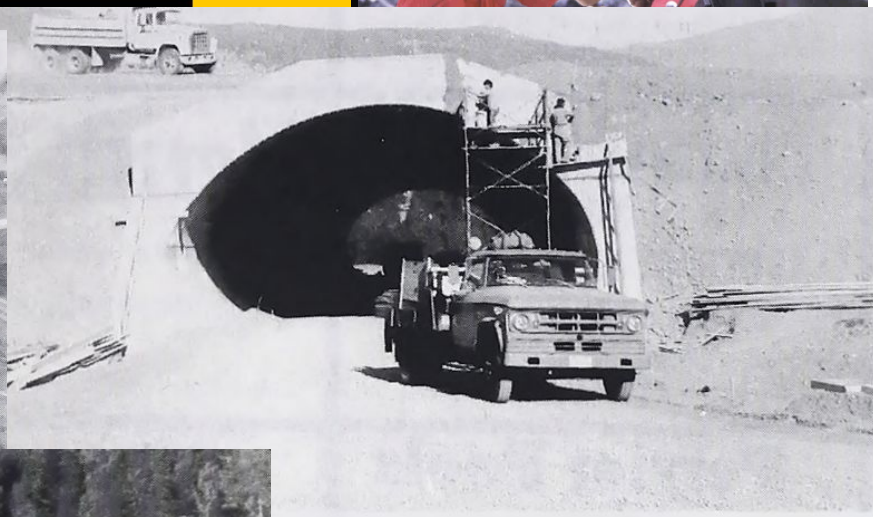
a,MH AUG. 7, 1985, pp. 6C, 7C
Dry Gulch Bridge Under Construction
by BC MOTT licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

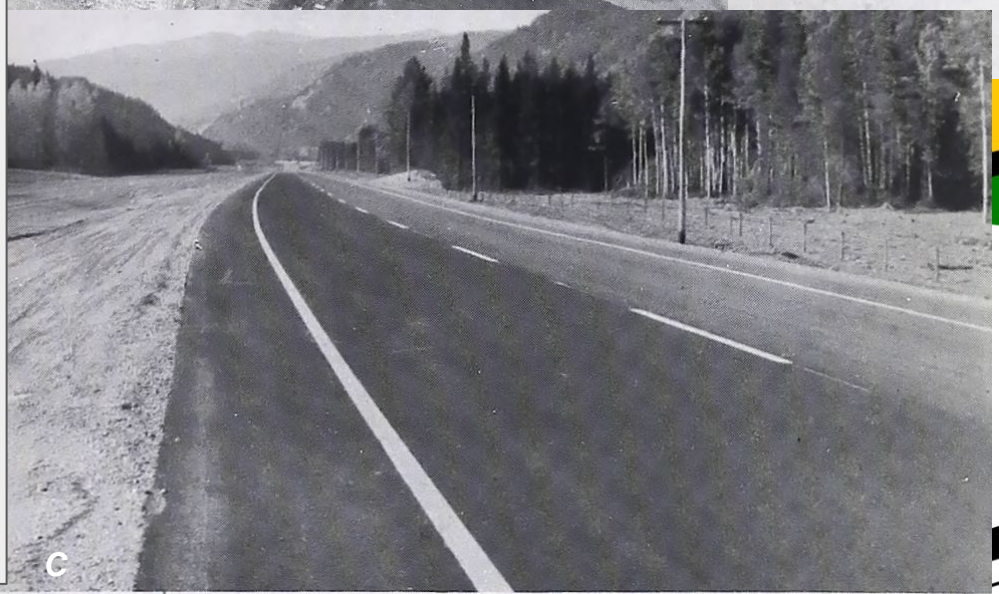
,MH Apr. 10, 1985p. 6C

C MH, Oct. 9, 1985

A Great Point of View
by BC MOTT Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Avalanche control on the Coquihalla BY BC MOTT
Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0
Credit Merritt Herald//Nicola Valley Museum





1986
-2026